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**Pedagogical Approaches for Improving a
Pre-service Training Program for
Teachers of English in Israel**

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS

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Abstract

This research project aimed to find pedagogical approaches for improving a pre-service training program for teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Israel. At first, it studied the experiences of 31 novice English teachers during their first year of teaching. All were graduates of the same fast-track college program for retraining academics. In the light of these findings, the college program was then analyzed and suggestions made regarding pedagogical changes to improve it. The data was collected through ethnographic research methods, within an interpretivist / constructivist paradigm.

It was found that the majority of the novice teachers were shocked by the reality of the classroom when they began teaching and felt unprepared for their new role. Particularly problematic spheres of difficulty were those connected to classroom management and discipline (as anticipated). Also prevalent were difficulties in acclimatizing to the school as a whole, dealing with the dynamic nature of teaching and understanding the many different roles a teacher has to fulfill. Native speakers of English had an additional difficulty since, while fluent in the language, they had no experience learning English as a foreign language themselves, and therefore lacked formal knowledge of grammar and techniques for teaching the language in a classroom situation. In addition, many native speakers were not fluent in Hebrew (the students' first language) and unfamiliar with the local culture, which also made it harder for them to cope.

The consequent analysis of the college program showed that while it adhered both to the professional guidelines for EFL teacher-training given by international experts and to the strict Israeli regulations as regards hours and subjects learned, some spheres were still not taught adequately. A major problem seemed to be academic courses with little practical connection to teaching EFL in Israeli schools, at times

given by lecturers who themselves had little or no experience teaching EFL to children. In addition, the teaching practice component was based on the reflective approach, with trainees teaching individual lessons once a week at most and analyzing them in depth. This did not reflect school reality the following year, when novices found themselves with considerably more responsibility, which led to graduates of the program feeling they received no genuine preparation for the teacher's role.

Pedagogical approaches for improvement included: (1) augmenting the practical emphasis of some courses, (2) building a new framework for the practical teaching component, and (3) developing a new oral proficiency course aimed at enhancing creative thinking skills in the context of school-based situations, which could help trainee teachers become prepared for the reality of a teacher's role.

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Keywords

- Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
- Teacher – training
- Fast-track programs
- Pedagogical Approaches
- Novice teachers
- Culture shock in schools
- Native English speakers and non-native speaking English teachers
- Education in Israel

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SUMMARY

Pedagogical approaches for improving a pre-service training program for teachers of English in Israel

Introduction

The overall aim of this research was to find ways for improving a pre-service training program for teachers of English in Israel. It focused on pedagogical approaches for improvement of the training program, based on the reality in school classrooms as experienced by new teachers in the field.

My background and interest in this research

I am an English teacher living in Israel, with twenty years' experience teaching in elementary schools and a further ten as a lecturer and teacher-trainer in 'Yolanda'¹ College of Education. Five years ago I took on the responsibility for supervising our graduates in their first, probationary year (known as the '*staj*'). From working closely with our students, teaching them and then supervising their teaching during the '*staj*' year, I realized how complex a task it is to prepare them for the field and how some accepted assumptions regarding teacher-training may not always be true. Growing awareness of the way college programs are built in general and the methods used within our own department have led me to ask: Are we utilizing our resources in the best possible way, and if not, how can our program be improved?

Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into five chapters: Chapter one gives an overview of pedagogical approaches and teacher-training, both in general terms and specifically regarding EFL teacher training programs, all this with reference to a wide variety of professional literature. At the end of the first chapter the specific program being studied is presented. The second chapter deals with principles of research methodology and the specific methods and tools chosen for this research. Chapter three presents the findings of the research, while chapter four discusses the findings in more depth and also makes suggestions for how the training program could be improved. Conclusions are given in chapter five.

¹ To preserve anonymity, the real name of the College being studied is not used in this research. 'Yolanda' is a fictitious name.

Chapter I :

Pedagogical and Methodological Components of English Teacher Training Programs : Overview of Theory and Literature

Part 1 : Teacher Training

I. 1.1 History and Development

Nowadays it is assumed that all teachers should have suitable training and hold relevant qualifications before they are given the responsibility for educating children. However, this has not always been the case and until the 19th century, few elementary school teachers received any particular instruction as to how to work at all (Feiman Nemser, 1990). High school teachers were expected to be of a higher academic level, but also received no specific didactic training as to how actually to teach. Edwards (1991) describes the development of teacher training from the first 'Normal Schools' introduced in France in 1794, until today's frameworks of teacher-training colleges and university departments of education.

i.1.2 Pedagogical Approaches

Commonly defined as the art or science of teaching or education², pedagogy is one of the main cornerstones of any pre-service teacher-training program. Both the underlying pedagogical approach and the pedagogical components incorporated into the courses will influence how its graduates will teach. Will they be traditional teachers who conform to the status quo, teaching as they themselves were taught in school or will their training give them the knowledge and ability to develop their own ideas, maybe even becoming educational entrepreneurs of the future and implementing new pedagogical approaches according to the changing times? Some of the main pedagogical approaches described in the main thesis are listed below, with the relevant bibliographic references:

- The classical approach to pedagogy, based on a respect for traditional knowledge and culture.
- Behaviourist pedagogy: an approach based on planned goals and structured lessons, using clear and accepted forms of reinforcement (Skinner, 1978, Nunan 1994).

² Oxford English Dictionary, 1978, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary and Thesaurus (accessed 8.11.2012)

- The hermeneutic pedagogical approach: gives students the tools to interpret knowledge for themselves (Gover,1997, Elliott, 2010, Shkedi , 2003).
- The existential approach : based around existence of the individual, self-expression and freedom of choice. A holistic approach, looking at the child and his environment as the focal point for learning and not the content or subject matter.
- The anthroposophic approach. Based on a holistic principles and introduced a century ago by Rudolf Steiner (1919), today there are around 800 anthroposophic (or 'Waldorf') schools worldwide.
- The democratic approach to pedagogy : students and teachers work together to plan and implement the educational structure. A worthy example of democratic pedagogy was the model ' Children's Republic' run by the doctor and educator Janusz Korczak in war-time Europe (Hartman, 2009).
- Critical pedagogy : an approach which encourages pupils and teachers to think for themselves and relate to education and knowledge as a means for upward mobility and strength. Knowledge is no longer 'banked' into pupils, but is put under the microscope of those being educated . (Freire, 1970, Apple 2006) .
- Constructionism: based on constructivist learning theory, provides the opportunity for experiential learning to take place (Papert and Harel,1991).
- Blended Learning : Computer-mediated learning which, while not an 'official' pedagogical approach per se, might be considered to be the pedagogical approach of the future. Blended learning mixes different learning environments, using advanced educational technologies, often combining this with face-to-face teacher-led instruction. With blended learning, the teacher is no longer as dominant as in traditional approaches, instead, the course content (built up by course developers) is the focal point . (Sharma & Barrett, 2007)

The effect of pedagogical approach on teacher-training

Beck (1999) gives an overview of four pedagogical approaches in teacher-training by describing the lecturers who use each approach as follows : (1) the 'giver', (2) the 'midwife' ,(3) the 'director, and (4) the 'researcher' . Beck concludes that the predominant approach in Israeli Teacher-Education today is still the first - the 'giver'. It would seem, though, that there is a contradiction between what is being propounded in teacher-training colleges and the pedagogical approach to how it is being taught. For example, students are examined formally and given numerical grades for courses in informal education methods or alternative assessment. Similarly, they routinely sit through traditional lectures on the

advantages of cooperative group work. It is a case of “Do as I say, not as I do”. Russell and Korthagen (1995, p185) refer to this phenomenon in their discussion of reflective teaching practices as the “*gap between the rhetoric of teacher educators and their own practice*”.

A further topic connected to pedagogical approaches in teacher training is that of the recent academization of teacher-training programs in Israel (re: Aviav et al 1993, Oplatka, 2002).

I.1.3 Methodology of Teacher-Training

Whereas pedagogy deals with the overall approach to education, methodology is far more specific and pragmatic. Ur (1996) describes three models or methods for teacher-training: (1) the ‘craft model’, (2) the ‘applied science model’ and (3) The ‘reflective model’. Ur advocates using the reflective model, although it appears that all three methods are combined in most training programs.

Components of teacher-training programs

Green (2010) explains simply how programs in most university Schools of Education or Teacher-Training Colleges are divided into four main areas: (1) academic teaching of the subject speciality, (2) theoretical ‘foundation’ courses that teach the philosophy and sociology of education, (3) practical methodology or didactics courses that aim to give ideas for how to teach particular subjects and (4) some type of practical experience in schools. It would seem as if teacher-training programs in Israel fit into this mold.

I.1.3.i The Subject Matter

Obviously, every teacher must have an acceptable knowledge of the subject she is teaching. There is also a need for ‘knowledge of subject matter for teachers’ (Loewenberg-Ball, 2008). In English studies, the subject matter comprises not only knowledge of the spoken and written language and the ability to use these fluently, but also academic knowledge of English literature and linguistics.

I.1.3.ii Theory of Education and Didactics

Academic courses in the theory of education and didactics are the central axis of any teacher-training program. Lemov (2010) lists forty-nine essential techniques for successful classroom practice, giving weight to the view that teaching is a learned profession and not something that ‘anybody can do’.

I.1.3 iii Practice Teaching

Successful teaching practice constitutes the synthesis and practical application of the subjects learned in the college courses. The exact amount of practice teaching and the way it is carried out differs from program to program, although it is widely accepted that the more practical experience a student has, the more prepared they will be for their future role. Ideally only 'good' schools and teachers should be used for teaching-practice, so as to provide good examples of modeling, however this is not always the case (Goodlad, 1991). Darling-Hammond (2006) describes the teaching practice reality as often *"haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements, with little guidance about what happens in them."* (re: Darling Hammond, 2006).

Shimoni (2006) suggests that in teaching-practice, so much emphasis is given to the reflection process that student-teachers believe this is representative of an authentic teaching situation. They are unaware that in the field they will need to 'think on their feet' and so are not prepared for the reality of the classroom when they become teachers themselves. In a study carried out in Israel, Sabar (2004) investigated the manner in which novice teachers adapt and acclimatize to their new profession. Sabar reported that *"Novice teachers are strangers in the sense that they come from one normative system – the teacher-training institute – with a clear set of norms of behavior, and try to enter another one – the school – whose norms are unfamiliar and different from theirs"*. This indicates that possibly the time spent in practice teaching placements does not represent the reality of the classroom that the trainees will experience when they first work in the field as teachers.

However much the implementation could be improved, the time spent in teaching practice in schools is still considered to be a very necessary and worthwhile part of a student - teacher's training.

I.1.4 Rapid Teacher Training . RTT

Shortened teacher-training programs

The accepted length for a full teacher-training program is usually 3 – 4 years, culminating in a Bachelor's degree in education and one or two specialist subjects. However, throughout the developed world there are also a variety of shortened programs, that train teachers in a year or even less. These are known as 'fast track' or 'Rapid Teacher Training' (RTT) programs. An example is the 'Teach For America' project (Teach For America website, accessed 2011).

Part 2. Training Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Broadly speaking, training English teachers follows the same framework as training teachers of other subjects. However, pedagogical approaches in TEFL are also based on considerations, sometimes political, relating to the underlying reason for learning English. As these differ, so inevitably will the didactic methods used to teach the language be different. Richards and Rogers (2001) describe several didactic methods for TEFL. These include:

- The grammar-translation method : based on formal understanding of grammar, lexis and translation of text.
- The audio-lingual method : a behaviourist approach, where learners listen to and repeat language chunks until they can produce them spontaneously.
- The Direct Method : uses the target language (in this case English) and no translation or other use of the mother-tongue is allowed.
- The Communicative Approach : aimed at developing communicative skills, emphasizes meaningful conversations and expression of ideas in English.
- Community Language Learning : working together as a group to learn both the language and other related cultural aspects the group wants to learn.
- The Whole Language Approach : emphasizes natural communication and the use of authentic language and texts. The different parts of language (grammar, vocabulary, idioms, etc) are not taught and practiced separately, Pupils become accustomed to the whole language before they have necessarily learned all the individual, formal rules.
- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): The foreign language is used as the medium for teaching another subject in the curriculum and there is a double educational aim: progress both in the target language and the subject matter. (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2010). CLIL has been identified as an effective pedagogical approach for TEFL in the modern age (European Commission Website, 2008).

When discussing TEFL methods it is important to differentiate between language learning and language acquisition. There is a major distinction between subconscious language acquisition, where the language is acquired naturally in an immersion situation (as with the mother tongue) and conscious language learning, which usually takes place in a classroom. (Krashen, 1987).

Part 3. Teaching English in Israel

Teaching English has many common points world-wide, however each country has its own regulations, norms, and ways of working. Since this research is concerned with teacher-training in Israel, specific details regarding English teaching in Israel and Israeli teacher-training programs will now be discussed. ³

I.3.1 Overview of English learning and teaching

English is an important subject in the Israeli curriculum. It is the first foreign language taught, and the one with most prestige. The Ministry of Education directive is for English learning to begin in 4th Grade, but in practice many schools begin before this. Pupils in 1st – 3 grades usually study English two hours a week, 4th- 6th Grades three to four hours a week and from then on between four and six hours weekly. All students must reach a basic level of English in order to achieve a high school matriculation certificate (*Bagrut*) and an additional English proficiency exam is needed for university or other higher education institutions.

I.3.2 School curriculum and recommended approach

English is taught in Israeli State schools according to a National Curriculum. Subtitled: "Principles and Standards for Learning English as a Foreign Language for All Grades", the English text comprises 39 pages and it comes with either a Hebrew or an Arabic translation. It is based on a whole language and communicative approach to language learning (re: English Curriculum, 2001).

1.3.3 Official guidelines for teacher-training in Israel

Israel is a dynamic country with an exceptional number of immigrants and the English Teaching sector reflects this. English teachers in Israel can be divided into three broad categories :

1. Native-born Israelis who learned English at school in Israel, were successful in the subject and now want to teach it.
2. Immigrants from English-speaking countries (often with an academic degree from these countries), who moved to Israel as young adults.
3. Immigrants from non-English speaking countries who were English teachers in their native countries and moved to Israel as adults.

³ * *In Israel there are several educational sectors and schools teach primarily either in Hebrew or Arabic, according to the local population. The norms for English study differ slightly from sector to sector. This study focuses on schools in the State Hebrew Language sector.*

Different types of teacher-training programs are offered for would-be English teachers. A regular, full-time 3 – 4 year B.Ed degree program is offered for the first category, whilst the second & third categories study in special, part-time or shortened programs, tailor-made to their needs. In addition, some Israeli university graduates, who have a high level of English, regardless of their degree subject, also choose to train as teachers in a shortened post-graduate course. At the end of their studies, all new teachers are supervised for their first year, for a probationary period known as the 'stage' (or 'staj') year. During this year they work as regular salaried teachers. Only after successfully finishing the 'staj' does a new teacher receive his/her teacher's license from the Ministry of Education. All academic degrees and teacher-training qualifications in Israel must be recognized by the 'Council for Higher Education' (CHE).

Guidelines regarding the content of English teacher-training programs

In the official document *Professional Standards for English Teachers : Knowledge and Performance* (2003), guidelines are set for the training and evaluation of English teachers for Israeli schools. The professional standards are divided into:

1. Content : the structure of the English language
2. Learning and the Learner: the learning process in general
3. Teaching and the teacher : classroom interaction, planning, materials
4. Assessment : an integral part of the teaching-learning process.
5. The Classroom environment : group dynamics, the physical environment

It can be seen from this list that the English Inspectorate of the Israeli Ministry of Education has high expectations of its fledgling teachers and the teacher-training programs that prepare them for their future role.

Part 4. Program Analysis

The program chosen for analysis in this research was an academic fast-track program on a post-graduate level, taken by university graduates with a high level of English. The specific teacher-training college used in this study was given the fictitious name 'Yolanda' in this research. The comprehensive program adheres to the Ministry of Education guidelines. It can be completed in one year of intensive study, but more often is spread over two years, studying two days a week.

The program at Yolanda college was compared to four other Israeli college programs and, whilst there were some differences regarding the individual courses offered, all followed a similar basic framework.

Chapter II : Objectives and Methodology of Research

II.1. Objectives

There were two distinct sections to this research project, each with its own objectives. The first, initial research studied the experiences and feelings of novice teachers. What happens after they complete their initial training and become teachers for the first time? This acted as a type of pilot study, on which the main research was based. The second section of the research then studied the novices' pre-service training program in the light of the pilot study findings. The conclusions of the research were then used to give informed suggestions for improvement in the training program (a third objective, leading to the ultimate aim). Put simply, the three objectives were:

1. To discover what happens to new English teachers in Israel in their first years of teaching and to pinpoint any particular difficulties.
2. To analyze some aspects of a pre-service training program for EFL teachers, including some specific courses. The courses and other spheres for analysis were chosen according to the difficulties reflected by the novice teachers.
3. To make suggestions for an improved pre-service training program. Ideally, these suggestions will help novice English teachers survive in Israeli schools, acclimatize successfully, actually enjoy themselves and reach their full potential as professional educators.

II. 2 : Methodology : Overview of Research Principles and Practices

Cohen (2007) describes research in the context of 'the search for truth' According to Cohen there are three different ways in which knowledge about a particular topic can be acquired : (1) through experience, (2) by reasoning and (3) through research (re: Cohen et al, 2007, ch.1). This explanation gives a sense of perspective and emphasizes that scientific research is not the only way to learn about a subject, but just one of several ways that should complement one another. This research project combined the different sources of input suggested by Cohen to reach its conclusions. Since predominantly qualitative methods were used, a short explanation of the principles behind these will now be given.

II.2.2. i Insight into Qualitative Research.

The metaphor of a collage or patchwork is often used to describe the process of qualitative research, since pieces are added one at a time to build up the

complete picture. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) define the methods used in qualitative research in general and ethnographic research in particular as:

“a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self.” (re: Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3).

This research project followed the principles of ethnographic research as defined by Denzin & Lincoln and, excepting photographs, includes all the methods of data collection they list above.

While ethnographic or qualitative research may be open and flexible, there is still a need for ‘rigor’ - to prove the results and conclusions are valid and reliable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term ‘trustworthiness’ to describe this concept . They give four necessary evaluative criteria to prove that a qualitative research project is trustworthy. These are: (1) Credibility: confidence that the findings are true. (2) Transferability: the ability to show how the findings can apply to other contexts, (3) Dependability: showing that the results repeat themselves and can be duplicated, and (4) Confirmability: proof that the results genuinely come from the people being studied and are not orchestrated by the researcher. This trustworthiness can be verified through triangulation. Olsen (2004) discusses triangulation in the context of methodological pluralism and explains how integrating research methods also gives a far fuller picture and allows for more comprehensive research than when only one method is used. In addition, when working with a small sample of subjects, triangulation can give legitimacy to the findings. Triangulation is usually carried out by cross-referencing and comparing different methods of qualitative research. However, more validity can be obtained when both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated. In this research, every effort was made to ensure validity and a variety of ethnographic methods were complemented by the data collected from questionnaires given to a larger sample.

II. 2, 4 Research Paradigms

Before starting any research, it is necessary to choose the most suitable overall approach or research framework to use. This framework is also known as the **research paradigm**. Mackenzie & Knipe (2006) explain the importance of deciding upon and defining the research paradigm thus:

“it is the choice of paradigm that sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for the research. Without nominating a paradigm as the first step,

there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, methods, literature or research design” (re: Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p 194).

II.2. 5 Participant Observers and Insider Research

Traditionally, for research to be considered valid, it must be carried out in a totally neutral manner and the methodology and tools used must reflect this neutrality, however in ethnographic or other interpretivist / constructionist research it is hard, if not impossible, to keep this neutrality. The researcher is by nature a part of the population he is studying. In their work on action research, McNiff et al (2003) describe the concept of ‘insider research’ in a positive light and explain the potential for deeper understanding when the researcher has a varied array of background knowledge regarding the field of study (re: McNiff et al, 2003. P12-13). Since I work as a teacher-trainer in the college being studied in this research, I was indeed an ‘insider researcher’. Therefore, throughout the research process I made every attempt to minimize my ‘personal agenda’, to encourage a free flow of ideas and so ensure that the findings were as representative and reliable as possible.

II.3. The Specific Methodology Used in this Research

In the first section of this chapter the theory behind research methods was discussed in general, academic terms. This second section relates to the specific methodology of this particular research project.

The topic of the research was: **Pedagogical approaches for improving a pre-service training program for teachers of English in Israel.**

II. 3. 1 The overall approach - the research paradigm

This research was based on an interpretivist / constructivist paradigm. This is described by Mackenzie & Knipe (2006) as a holistic approach, accepting multiple participant meanings. Such a paradigm encourages hermeneutic consideration of the data to construct a viable social or historical ‘picture’. As such, theories are generated by this approach, not verified and reality is not defined as an absolute, but construed through the views of those being studied. Patterns of behavior were examined and research into them developed further throughout the research process. The varied sources of data were then cross-referenced and interpretations drawn to construct a credible portrayal and

explanation of the situation. The suggestions regarding pedagogical improvements to be made were based on this composite picture.

II.3.1.i **Research Questions**

There were two distinct sections to this research project. The initial research studied the experiences and feelings of novice teachers. The consequent and main research was based on the findings of the first section, and analyzed Yolanda College's training program in the light of the pilot study findings. Therefore, there was one overall research question that included the purpose of the complete study and each separate section also had its own specific research questions.

Overall Research Question:

How can this pre-service EFL teaching program be improved, so as to prepare novice English Teachers to cope better in the field?

Research question and sub-questions for part 1 of the research :

- **What do novice teachers experience when they first go into the field?**
- Are there common phenomena or challenges in schools that affect the majority of novice teachers?
- Do novice English teachers feel ready and confident in their new role?
- How do the experiences of native English speakers compare with those of non-native speakers. Are they better teachers?

Research question and sub-questions for part 2 of the research (based on the findings in part 1):

- **What is the real content of the pre-service training program in the College and is this enough to prepare trainees for work in the field?**
- Does the accepted TEFL syllabus in the College include all the requirements for successful teacher-training?
Do courses provide what they purport to give?
- Does the background of lecturers in the college give them enough experience in the field to be role models, enabling them to model classroom skills?
- Are there other factors that affect the success of the training program?

II.3.1.ii. Hypotheses

The intention of this research was to carry out an open, holistic inquiry. The initial aim was to present the state of affairs, not to prove or disprove any particular opinion or hypothesis. At the same time, I did have some hypotheses I wanted to test against the findings. These were:

- To ensure maximum preparation for the field, pre-service teacher-training should be based on pragmatic, rather than academic principles.
- Knowledge of Israeli school culture and the pupils' first language (Hebrew) are important factors for successful teaching. Therefore, native speakers of English are not necessarily the best English teachers.
- The more experience teacher-trainers have in schools, the more they are able to model successful teaching strategies. Therefore, high-level academics are not necessarily the best teacher-trainers.

II.3.2. Method

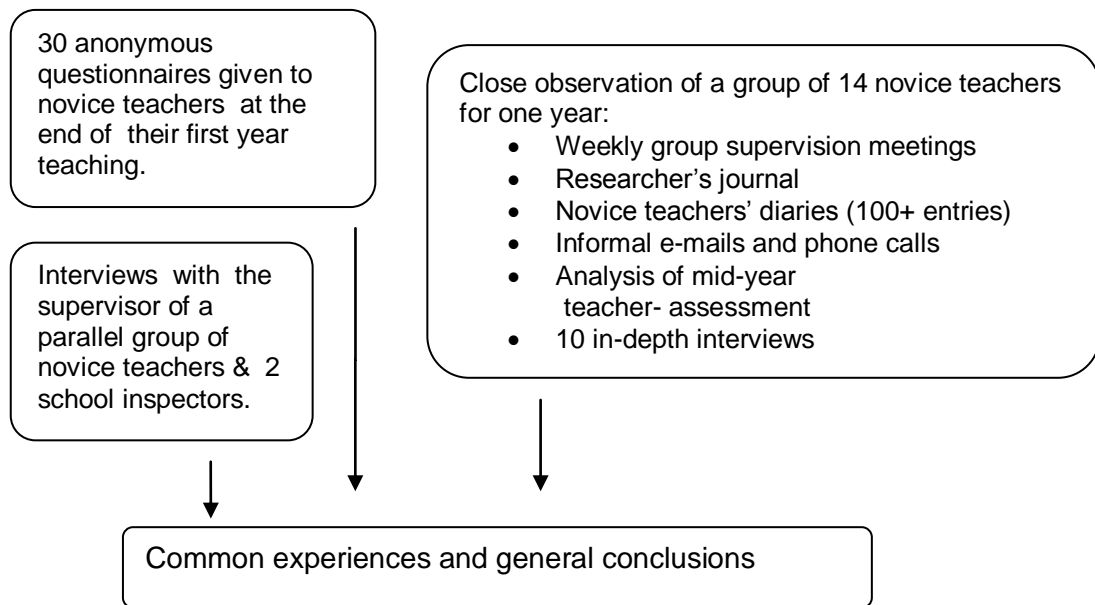
Part 1 : Novice Teachers' Experiences

This study was based on the experiences of novice teachers, graduates of the *Yolanda College* academic retraining program for TEFL. 31 novices completed questionnaires at the end of their first year of teaching (the '*staj*'). Of these, a group of 14 novices were followed closely throughout the year with weekly meetings. Their progress – successes and difficulties - was recorded in the researcher's journal, through their own diary entries, through informal e-mail correspondence between them and the researcher and in personal, in-depth interviews with ten of the participants. In addition, questionnaires were given to an additional 30 new students about to begin their training and 40 fresh graduates before beginning their '*staj*' year. This was in order to gauge attitudes and provide the option of comparing these initial, pre-service attitudes with novice teachers' attitudes after a year's experience in the field. The data was collected in the years 2010 – 2012.

II.3.2. ii Data collection methods (the 'tools' used)

In order to adhere to the rules for valid ethnographic research (re: Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) data in this part of the research was collected in several different ways, in order to enable triangulation of possible common patterns (re: Olsen, 2004). These are summarized in the following diagram (Fig II.2):

Fig II.2: Methods and tools used to research the experiences of novice English teachers in Israel



All the research techniques and the specific ‘tools’ used are described and explained in the full research report and included as appendices.

It should be noted that three different questionnaires were prepared, as follows :

- Questionnaire for new students beginning their studies
- Questionnaire for fresh graduates at the end of their studies
- Questionnaire for novice teachers after their first year of teaching (the main questionnaire – 6 pages long, reproduced in Appendix A)

The questionnaires themselves are a combination of directed, Likert-type questions (circle a number on the scale of 1-5) , open-ended questions requiring short narratives and requests for opinions .

III.3. 3. Analysis of the college teacher-training program

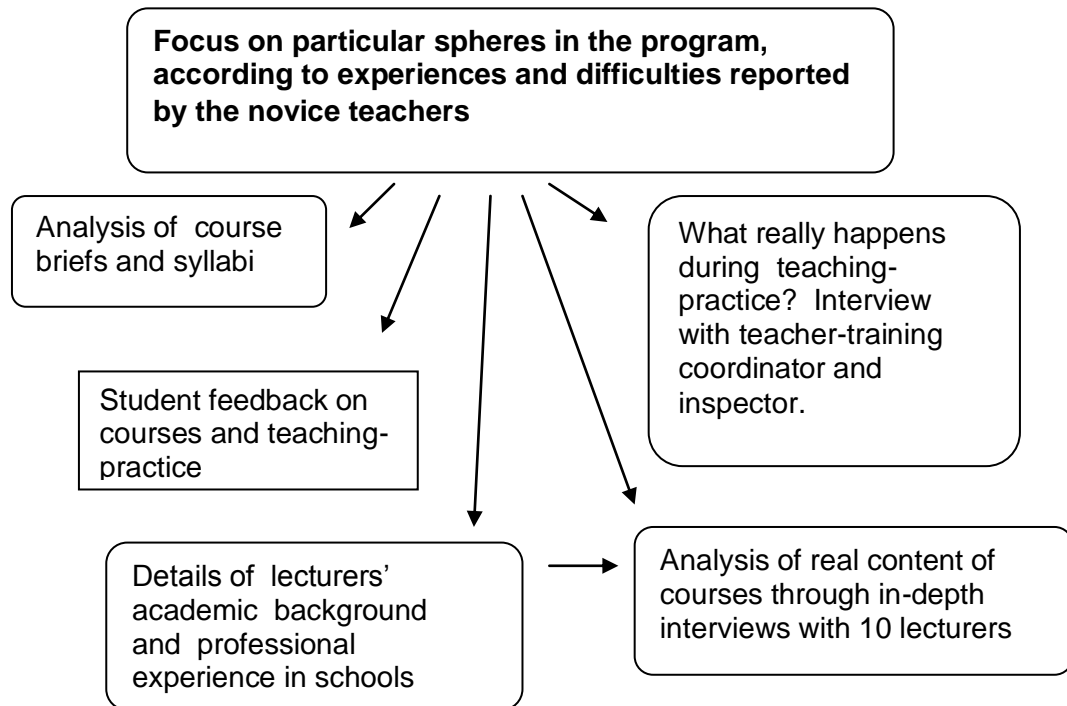
The teacher-training program being studied was described in general terms in chapter 1 of the main thesis. The overall conclusion on looking at the program as officially presented was that the program is comprehensive and well-balanced, containing all the necessary components of a pre-service training program for EFL teachers. However, in the light of the difficulties experienced by the novice teachers, it became clear that the program was not exactly as it seems on paper and needed to be looked at more fully. This was the purpose of the second section of my research, which took the most common difficulties encountered by the novice teachers, and pinpointed the relevant college courses that apparently

were not as effective as they could have been. These were analyzed in greater depth, the lecturers interviewed and the content of their courses then examined in more detail than the official syllabi, in order to discover topics that may have been either lacking or over-emphasized. Since the content of any course is inevitably influenced by the experience and knowledge of the lecturer details regarding the lecturer's background were collected also.

II.3.3.i. The Training Program - Data Collection Methods

The methods of data collection in this second section are summarized in the diagram below (Fig. II,3) :

Fig II.3: Methods and tools used to research the college teacher-training program



The results of both sections of the research were recorded systematically, analyzed according to different categories and note made of repeated trends. Charts were made showing the results of the Likert-type questions. Novices' diary entries were used where relevant, as was the researcher's journal. Interesting or especially pertinent comments made in the interviews (or narrative part of the questionnaires) were quoted. It should be mentioned here that there was such a wealth of information that it was hard to decide which items to include and which had to be left out. Those chosen were in the main those that reiterated themselves in the various forms of data collection and so, through triangulation, showed that they had validity and relevance to the study.

Chapter III : Findings

Analysis of novice teachers' experiences with connection to their pre-service training curriculum

III.2. Findings Part 1 : The Novice Teachers' experiences

The findings were categorized and presented according to topics or points of interest that arose from the combined data, rather than considering each type of data source (questionnaires, diaries, interviews, etc) separately. It was decided that this manner of presenting the information would be more comprehensive than dealing with each data source as a separate entity. The completed data bases with the results of all the questionnaires and excerpts from diaries, e-mails and transcripts of interviews with novice teachers are attached to the main work as appendices.

The main questionnaire analyzed was that given to novice teachers at the end of their first year teaching (Appendix A). The additional data collected from the other questionnaires - those given to new students (N=21) and to fresh graduates before their stage year (N=38) was used primarily for comparison purposes and to give perspective to the novice teachers' replies.

III.2.1. Details on novice teachers and their *staj* framework

Of the 31 novice teachers who filled in the questionnaire, all but two were women. Thirteen taught in elementary schools and eighteen in junior-high / high schools. Of these, six taught only at the JH level and five only at the HS level. The majority (25) were native English speakers and came from English-speaking countries, while six were not. Nearly all of the sample (28) were only English teachers; only three had other duties as a home-room teacher. There were considerable differences between the workloads of novice teachers, as seen in Fig. III, 1:

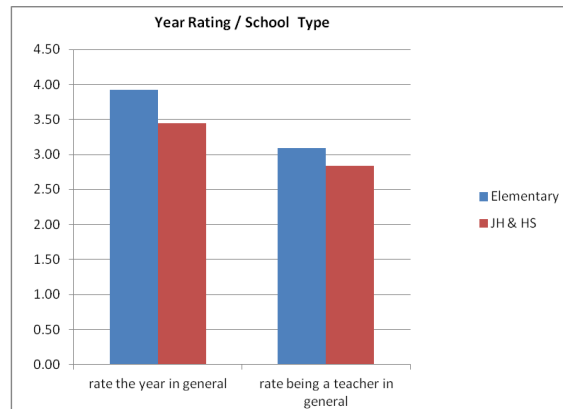
Fig. III.1 Novice Teachers' workload (N=31)

	range	mean average	Standard deviation
Number of classes taught each week	1 - 6	4.43	1.50 (0.295)
Pupils taught each week	11 - 200	92.94	49.55 (0.533)
Teaching hours per week	5 - 32	18.26	5.45 (0.335)

III.2.2 The year as a whole

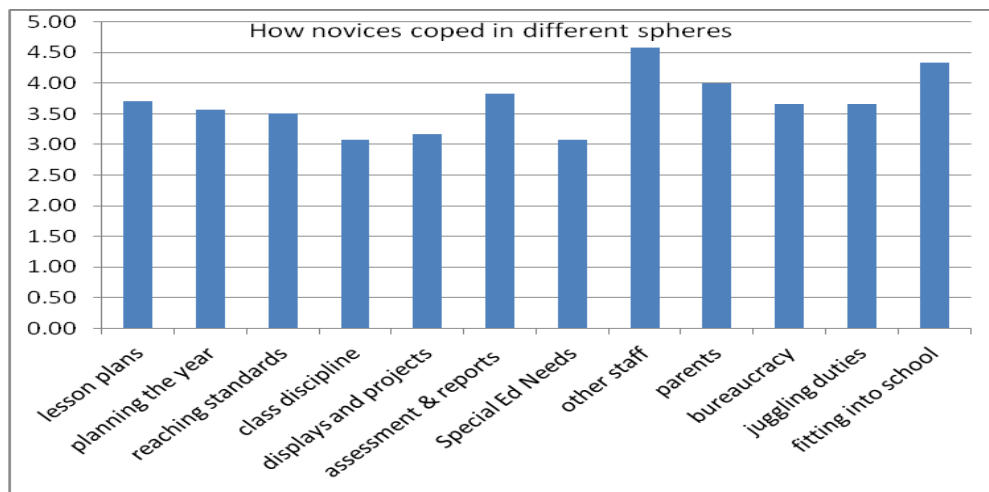
Two introductory questions aimed to give an overall summary of their experiences. The question “*In general, how would you rate the year?*” gave five worded options. When graded on a scale from 1 – 5, with 1 being the lowest score, the mean average was 3.42. Five possible options were also given to complete the sentence ‘*Being a teacher was...*’ The mean average for this item was 2.93. The results are shown in Fig. III.2 where it can be seen that novice teachers in elementary schools had slightly more positive views regarding their experiences in school in general than those in junior high or high schools.

Fig. III,2 : Novice teachers’ general rating of the profession, according to school type (rating on a scale of 1 – 5, N=31)



To get a more detailed picture of how they coped, all the novices were asked to rate how well they felt they coped in various spheres (Fig. III.3). The grading levels were worded as follows : (1) I didn’t do this well at all, (2) I found this difficult, (3) I just about managed, (4) I coped well most of the time, (5) Fine. I succeeded easily

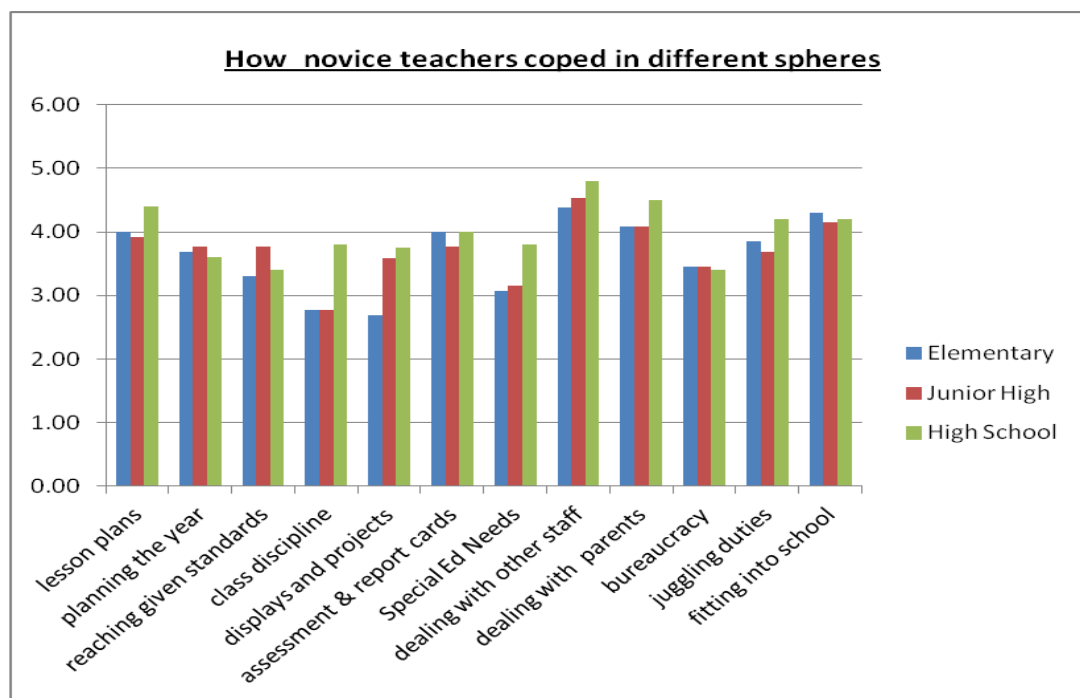
Fig III.3. How novice teachers coped in different spheres (rated on a scale of 1 – 5, N=31)



IT can be seen that they managed to cope in all spheres, although not always easily. They appeared to fit into their schools quite easily and got on well with other staff. The two spheres that seemed to be harder for the novices to cope with were classroom discipline and dealing with pupils with special educational needs, which were both given an average rating of 3 (“I just about managed”).

IN order to determine the particular difficulties found in the different school types, the results were then subdivided into school type : elementary, junior high and high school (Figure III.4) . While the numbers are small, it can still be seen that in all spheres the novice teachers found it easier to cope in high schools than in elementary schools. This is a somewhat surprising result, since it is often assumed that it is easier to cope with younger pupils (Cameron,2001, Ur,1996). Also, it negates the results in Fig III.2, where the elementary teachers gave higher ratings regarding the year and being a teacher in general..

Fig III.4 : How novice teachers in different schools coped in different spheres (rating on a scale of 1 – 5, N=31)



As can be seen from the graph in Fig. III.4, the high school teachers coped considerably better with planning their lessons and keeping classroom discipline than the teachers in elementary schools. Whether this was due to the more structured framework of high schools or the fact that there is usually a larger team of English staff to give direction and support in high schools is not shown from the questionnaires. However, from supervision of novice teachers throughout the year

it could be seen that the support framework in high schools was more evident. An example can be seen in the following e-mail :

*“Hi Elizabeth,
I wanted to let you know about something that happened ... My rakezet (coordinator) told me that there were students who were complaining about my class (the 10 grade 3 pointers) and that I couldn't control them. So she suggested that she take two of my four hours. So in the end I said ok...I feel like such a failure! Oh well... ‘Annie’. 13.12.2010 (JH & HS novice teacher)*

Whilst it can be seen that Annie was not overly pleased with this solution at first, in later conversations with Annie it turned out that this had been a successful solution and had taken the pressure off her just enough for her to concentrate on her other classes and succeed with them. She was not left alone to cope with the problem by herself. Compared to this, the majority of Israeli elementary schools have a very small English staff and often no official coordinator or person in charge to help with problems of this type. Compare Annie's experience with the following excerpt from an e-mail sent by Susan who teaches in an elementary school to her former lecturers in the college.

*“Dear Teachers,
.... I am nearly at my wit's end with the 5th grade and am desperate for help, support, and advice. I have contacted my mentor teacher and hope we can set up a meeting (soon), but in the meantime, I am contacting you in the hopes that perhaps one of you might have a few minutes to speak over the phone before then.... I would really, really appreciate it.
Many, many thanks in advance,
‘Susan’ (5.9.2010 e-mail)*

This cry for help from Susan shows clearly how in her elementary school there is no support structure to help a new teacher, however much she needs and requests it. This feeling was reiterated by another novice , Sally, who also seemed to feel alone in her elementary school :

*“It was very helpful working and studying at the same time. I didn't have enough help on-site, ...I didn't have anybody observing me, helping me, giving me tips until I demanded it. And then she did it as a favour, I had to squeeze it out of her “
(Sally, interview, minute 2)*

The problem regarding novice teachers in elementary schools was brought up spontaneously by the inspector Ms. TS. When asked in general terms how she thinks novice teachers could be helped integrate into schools, her answer included the following comment :

“ The problem is often they go into school very alone. In elementary schools they’re often the only English teacher and the principal and the admin staff don’t know how to buddy them, to lead them in, give them a back-up system so that they’ll be able to cope in the classroom better”.

(re: Ms. TS – inspector, interview excerpt, minute 2.00)

III. 2. 3 The workload – Number of classes and teaching hours

Interestingly, on analysis of the questionnaire results alone, the number of classes taught or the number of teaching hours per week did not seem to affect novice teachers’ success or attitudes towards teaching. However, the difficulty of dealing with large classes was brought up several times in the weekly *staj* course meetings and also in the personal interviews with novice teachers. The following is a typical example :

“It was excruciatingly difficult because I had more than 30 kids in each class and sometimes as much as 37. I was teaching gimel (3rd Grade), daled (4th Grade) and one horrible vav (6th Grade) and it was really, really hard”

(re: transcript of interview with Sally: minute 1.15)

III. 2. 4 Changing Attitudes: The shock of reality

Throughout the stage year, during our weekly meetings and in the interviews at the end, it became clear that the majority of novice teachers had been unaware of the reality of being a teacher during their training and disillusionment when they began working ran high. When asked to write words or phrases of their own associated with teaching the novice teachers clearly showed changing attitudes and beliefs. Whilst more than 200 different words and phrases were given, when considered carefully, it could be seen many were synonyms and that nearly all of them fitted into nine main categories. The words given by the interviewees at each of the milestones were then written in a chart according to these categories (Fig III.6). Where the same word was repeated, it was not written again in the chart, but all were counted and the number of words or phrases that appeared in each particular category marked down.

Fig III.6 : Words and phrases associated with being a teacher , written freely at three different milestones of trainee teachers' development

Word or concept	New students beginning training	New graduates, before starting staj year	After staj year
Challenging	challenging (4)	challenging (10)	challenging (12)
Fulfilling	Fulfilling, Important, satisfaction, valuable (6)	Fulfilling ,gratification , satisfaction , rewarding, inspiring, meaningful / important (13)	Fulfilling ,Rewarding, important, parents' appreciation (10)
Creativity	creative (2)	Creative / imagination (7)	Creative (4)
Idealism	Role model, motivator, educator, (6)	Contribute to society Affect future youth, Mentor, Job of life , relationships, ethical Role model, facilitator, make a difference. shaping minds of future, installing love of literature invest your soul (14)	Helping, developing (2)
Excitement / dynamic aspect to teaching	Energetic, fun, funny, constantly changing, exciting, surprising (7)	Crazy, energetic, stimulating, mentally awake,, vitalizing, fun , improvisation (11)	Every day different, fun, great feeling, flexible, amazing, supernatural, magician, good and bad days, roller coaster, wonderful, exhilarating, never a dull moment, ever-changing, invigorating, every day something new, entertaining, Wonderful or horrific depending on class (20)
Hard work - positive connotation	Lots of preparation, hard job, hard (4)	Hard work, demanding, dedication, perseverance, committed, supportive, organization, persistence, (11)	Hard work, lot of work, long hours, tiring (7)
Hard work - negative connotation	Underpaid (1)	tired, harder than looks, unappreciated, (6)	Tiring, underpaid, exhausting, punching bag, unappreciated, impossible, overwhelming, discouraging, belittling, thankless, being judged all the time, toughest job there is, stressful, degrading, unsatisfying, shocking, , worried, nightmare, humiliating, stressful, frustrating

			(24)
Mention of children	Love children, love the students, care for them beyond teaching hours (3)	Love and believe in children, Love kids Make a difference in child's life Interacting with children (4)	(0)
Attributes of teacher	Well educated, be flexible, warmth and love, caring, giving, compassionate, dedicated, strong, bold, disciplined, engaging, friend, respect, authority, social intelligence, love teaching, good people skills, prepared (18)	Interested, learning, self-confident, empathetic, respect, stable, perseverance, well-rounded, committed, exemplary, accessible, supportive, inspiring, academic (14)	Social worker, mother, helpful, professional, understanding, compassionate, learn (7)
total	51 (out of 60 words or phrases given in all)	90 (out of the 97 words or phrases given in all)	86 (out of the 93 words or phrases given in all

Although the exact numbers cannot be compared, since fewer new students filled in the questionnaires, on looking at the chart, some interesting conclusions can be made. First of all it can be seen that the challenging and fulfilling nature of work as a teacher develops with experience. At the same time, it appears as if idealism and belief in the worth of teaching is nearly lost when the novice teacher begins teaching. The new graduates leave the college full of motivation believing they will make a difference. Fourteen different phrases such as “role model, affect future youth. “make a difference”, motivator” and so on were given by the new graduates, whereas only 2 such comments were made by those after their *staj* year. More to the point, while the word ‘children’ was given 3 times by new students and 4 times by new graduates, **none** of the novice teachers thought to relate to the children they taught by the end of their *staj* year.

IT should be remembered that the instruction was to write words or phrases ‘associated with being a teacher’. Taking this into account, it was noticeable that new students connected this to the positive attributes needed by teachers, such as ‘caring’, compassionate, ‘well educated’ or ‘social intelligence’, but this connection lessened as they progressed in their training. New students beginning their studies wrote 18 positive attributes about teachers, while new Graduates wrote 14 and novice teachers after their *staj* year chose only 7 words of this type.

An interesting point that came up from analysis of these words and phrases was that of the dynamic and exciting aspect of teaching. The novice teachers after *staj* wrote 20 words or phrases illustrating this. These include: *Every day different, fun, supernatural, magician, good and bad days, roller coaster, wonderful, exhilarating, never a dull moment, ever-changing, invigorating, entertaining.*

This dynamism was also referred to by several of the novice teachers during the year, and indeed it seemed that the ability to change plans 'go with the flow' and even enjoy it was a crucial factor in helping novice teachers succeed. This was described eloquently by several novices in their *staj* diary 'reflections'

The most surprising and worrying result concerns the use of negative descriptions. Whereas only one such phrase was given by a new student ('underpaid') and six by the new graduates, 24 extremely negative phrases were given by the experienced novice teachers, some of which this researcher found quite shocking. For new teachers to describe their work as *degrading, discouraging, belittling, thankless, shocking or humiliating* indicates that something is definitely wrong. The use of such metaphors as a '*punching bag*' or '*nightmare*' are even more worrying. It appears that the feeling of shock and disillusionment begins on the first day with many novice teachers. This was expressed quite poignantly by Bianca in her first diary entry thus:

"I started this year with a lot of excitement. I would have my own classes without other teachers constantly sitting in and watching me. I would be responsible for these classes. It was a scary but exciting thought for me. I walked into my first two classes with lots of smiles and exuding a bubbly excitement but by the end of these classes I felt drained from trying to get the children to be quiet and to do the work I had prepared. I was devastated. I didn't realize it would be this hard! "

Bianca – staj diary, September.

"If only I'd known"

Throughout the year I heard the novice teachers say one particular phrase time and time again : "If only I'd known..." This was particularly prevalent in the weekly group meetings, but also repeated itself in the novices' diary entries. Whether said in a tone of anger or merely regret, in every case the examples given suggested that things could have been easier if only the novice teacher had been told of something beforehand and so been better prepared for reality.

This ‘if only I’d known refrain cropped up so much that I arranged a formal activity with my *staj* group, based on the ‘If only I’d known” theme. I repeated this with two other *staj* groups. It is worth mentioning here that an advantage of being a participant researcher was the opportunity it gave to collect extra data ‘in real time’, as new concepts became apparent. One such example was this “If only I’d known ...” activity.

Combining the results from all the three groups of novice teachers who did this activity, the most prevalent ‘If only’s..’ were connected to the following spheres: Bureaucracy and the Israeli school system, the workload and time spent at home, classroom management and discipline, computer use in the school and teaching grammar. (re: researcher’s notes and novices’ lists collected after ‘if only’ activity)

III. 2. 5 Classroom discipline

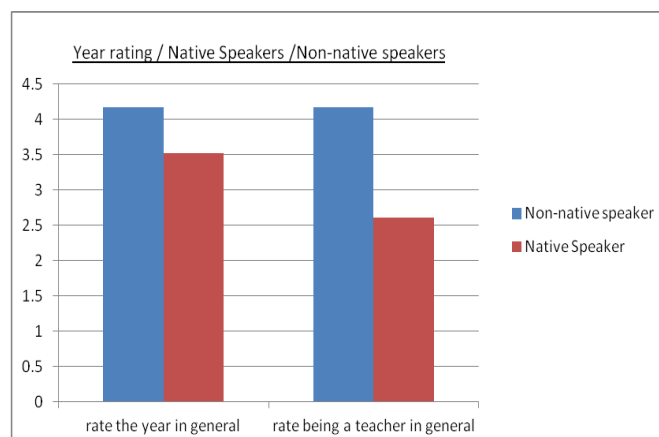
The difficulties about keeping discipline in the classroom, especially at the beginning of the school year were shown in the questionnaires and reiterated in the diaries and interviews with novice teachers. In an interview with a school inspector (Ms. TS), when asked about the main difficulties she sees with novice teachers, she immediately answered :

“Discipline. It’s a problem over the board.....” (re: interview with Ms. TS)

III. 2. 6 Native English speakers and non-native speakers

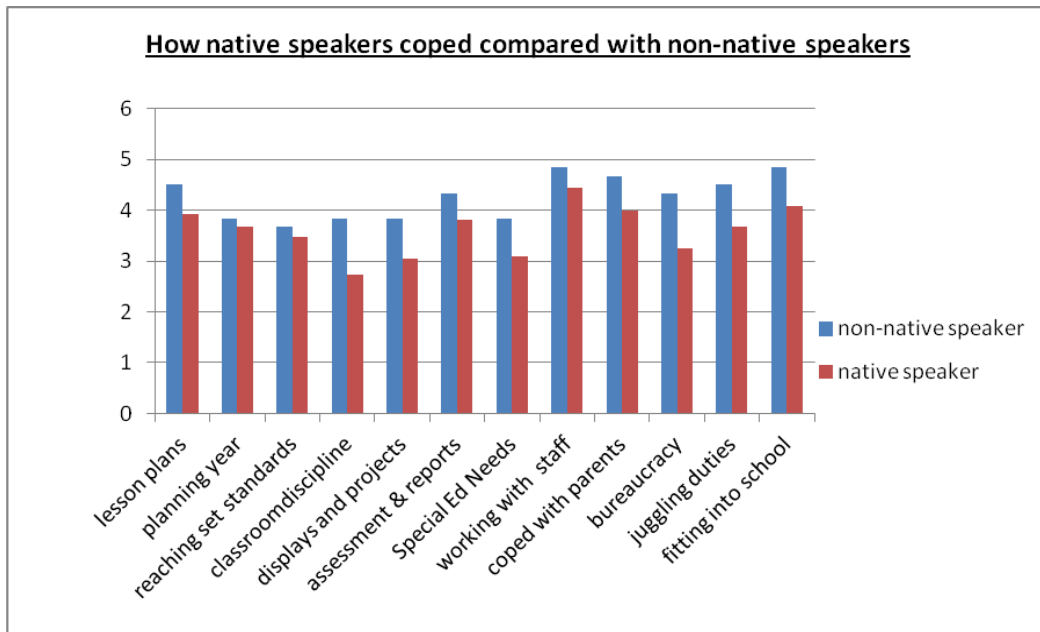
There is a common assumption that teachers who have the greatest proficiency in their subject matter (in this case the English Language) will undoubtedly make the best teachers. However, when the questionnaire answers were divided into native English speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (non-NS), the results showed a different reality (Fig. III.7)

Fig. III.7 : Comparison of Native English Speakers and Non-Native speakers after their first year of teaching. (rated on a 1 -5 point scale. N=31)



It can be seen that the non-native speakers of English rated the year more highly than the native speakers. Similarly, when the rating of how they coped in different spheres of teaching was divided between the native and non-native English speakers, it can be seen that the non-native speakers coped better in every sphere (Fig.III.8).

Fig III.8 : How native English speakers (NS) coped in different spheres compared to non-native speakers (1 -5 point scale.)



It is pertinent to mention here that all the diary and interview quotes concerning discipline problems given previously in this chapter originated from novices who were native English speakers, a point which reinforces the statistics.

Throughout the year it became apparent that many of the discipline problems were caused by either a lack of Hebrew or knowledge of Israeli culture. The fact that native speakers of English have excellent language skills could not compensate for this lack. Susan explained the situation thus:

“The hardest thing for me was...I didn’t know the school lingo. I didn’t know words like “I need to blow my nose”. There are so many basic phrases...I just didn’t understand what was going on.” Susan, interview excerpt . Minute 2.35

Since being a native English speaker usually corresponds with being an immigrant to Israel, often there were difficulties due to a lack of cultural background. This is illustrated well by the following comment :

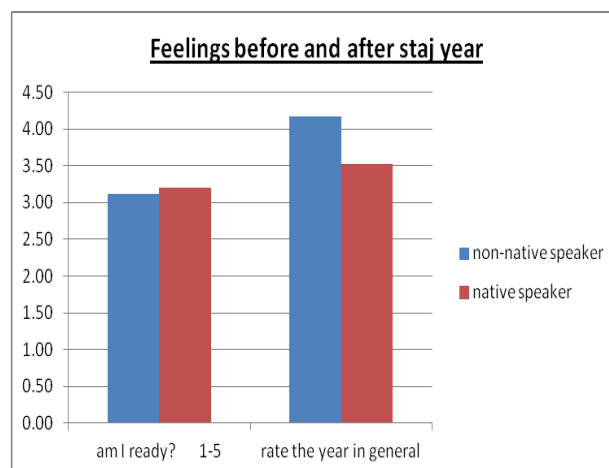
“..... For example – what’s a ‘ mechanech’? (home-room teacher). We don’t have home-room teachers in America. “ (Susan’s interview. Minute 6.26)

In addition, the native English speakers seemed to have more difficulty with teaching grammar. The following quote is one of the many examples quoted by the novices on this topic :

“...By the way we were never taught how to teach grammar which is a shame.... Because I’m a native speaker they assumed I knew these things which I don’t. I had to teach myself what the heck is present progressive... I had to learn grammar from the internet.” (Annie – interview transcript, minute 34)

To gain a wider understanding of these unexpected findings regarding native speaker teachers, a comparison was then made between the expectations and actual experience of both native and non-native English speakers. The questionnaires filled in by new graduates before beginning their *staj* year included the question : In general , do you think you are ready to go out and begin your teaching career? The results of this question were compared with novice teachers’ rating after their first *staj* year. The results are shown in Fig. III.9.

Fig III.9 : Feelings before and after *staj* year – native Speakers / Non-native speakers (rated on a 5 point scale)



As can be seen, before the *staj year* , the feelings of readiness were similar, with the native English speakers showing slightly more confidence (3.2 on a 5 point scale compared with 3.1). At the end of the year, the Native English speakers on average rated the year as 3.52, compared with the non-native speakers who clearly felt they succeeded better and gave it a 4.17. In other words, the non-

native speakers fared much better than they had anticipated, compared to the native speakers of English.

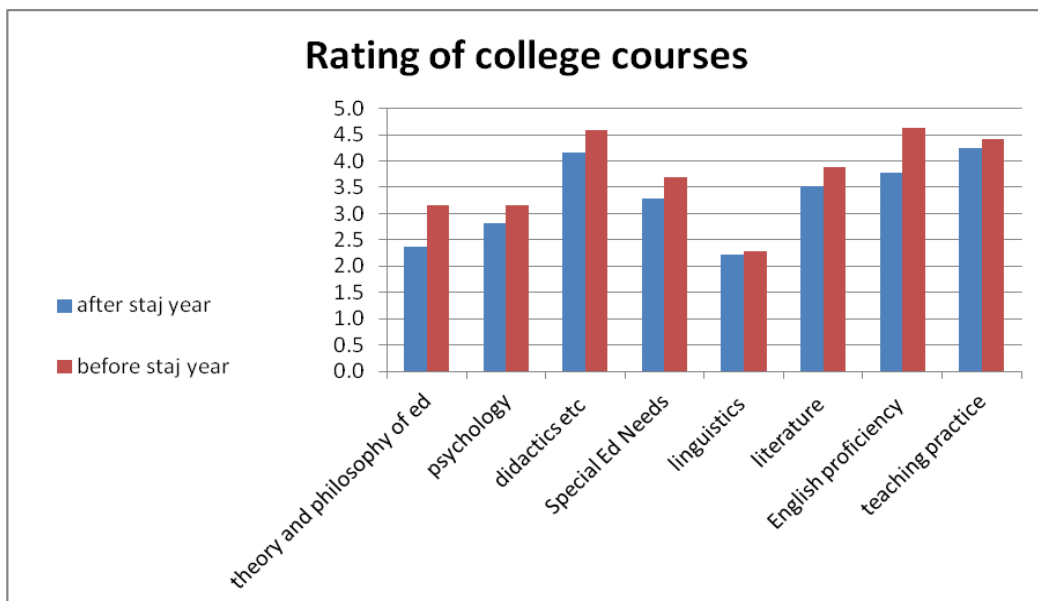
The comparative success of the non-native speakers of English compared to the native English speakers was an interesting discovery, especially since it negates commonly accepted assumptions in Israel regarding English teaching.

III. 2. 7 Novices' assessment of their training program

Pages 4-5 of the questionnaire for novice teachers after their *staj* year required the novice teacher to focus on their initial teacher-training program and to consider how it helped them prepare for their new role. It included two surveys and several more open questions. One survey listed the various subjects taught in the college and interviewees were told to rank them. The same survey was given to new graduates before their *staj* year and also to novice teachers after their *staj*, so it was possible to see the changes in attitude and opinion that came from a year's experience. The results are shown in Figure III. 11.

It can be seen that in overall terms, new graduates appreciated their training more than novices after their first year of teaching. After their *staj* year it was noticeable that linguistics was held in very low esteem with a rating of 2.2 and the theory and philosophy of education (taken in Hebrew with the general student population) also rated only 2.4. The practical courses were clearly considered to be most worthwhile, with didactics achieving 4.2 and actual teaching practice (in schools) ranked 4.3

Fig . III. 11 : Graduates' assessment of how their college courses prepared them for work, before and after their *staj* year (1-5 point scale.)
 Graduates before *staj* : N=38, Graduates after *staj* N=31)



In the last part of the questionnaire the novices were also asked about their views on the program in general, especially the teaching practice component. The specific question was: Do you think the Teaching Practice in your program gave you a good picture of the reality of life as a teacher? Explain

Eleven novices saw their Teaching Practice in a very positive light, with several relating this to their host teacher. Seven saw their teaching practice either negatively or as unhelpful. The remaining nine novices gave somewhat ambivalent answers, often beginning "Yes, but...". The main reasons for the 'but' was the fact that in teaching practice as students they only taught individual lessons, without the responsibility and pressure, which came as a shock when they became teachers and that their placements did not always allow them to see enough teaching relevant to their future positions.

III. 2. 7. i Novices' suggestions for Improving the program

At the end of the questionnaires the novices were asked to give their own suggestions for improving the program. Only 22 of the 31 novices who completed the questionnaires gave suggestions of their own, with 9 leaving this question blank. The following suggestions appeared more than once:

- More courses on behavior and classroom management (9)
- More Teaching Practice, with a variety of teachers (5)
- Dealing with the Ministry, bureaucracy, teacher's role, etc (5)
- More grammar for EFL (3)
- Dividing the program into Elementary and JH tracks (2)
- Practical Hebrew (for Native English speakers) (2)

These results were also backed up in the interviews, such as the following comment:

"It would have been really helpful to have had an intensive 'Ulpan' (language course) with school-based words. ... The Hebrew we learned wasn't practical... We needed an Israel-based sociology course. We had sociology – but in it we watched a video about my neighbourhood in New York,, Interesting but had nothing to do with being a teacher in Israel.. " (Susan – interview. minutes 3 – 7)

Regarding the request for more courses on classroom management, it should be noted that all the novices had taken at least one year-long course in classroom management and discipline, which they rated highly, however it seems that there was a sharp difference between their appreciation of this course and the tools it gave them in the field. Similarly, all students took courses in 'the heterogeneous

classroom' and in Special Educational Needs (SEN), both aimed at helping them deal with a variety of pupils and levels in their classrooms. It appears as if these courses also were not as helpful as they could have been, another point which needs more study.

The suggestion to add in information on how to deal with bureaucracy and the Israeli Ministry of Education into the training program is interesting. This appears to be a novel idea and something that is not incorporated at all. Since such a suggestion came from several novice teachers, it is necessary to look into this as well.

III.3. FINDINGS – Part 2 - The College Program

III.3.1 Aspects of the College Program to be studied

After consideration of the novices' experiences, it was decided to focus on the following aspects of the training program and investigate them further:

- 1) The content and coherence of the program in general
- 2) In -depth analysis of specific courses and their relevance to the field:
- 3) Teaching Practice
- 4) The '*staj*' support course
- 5) Topics or courses that appear to be lacking
- 6) The College staff : Professional background and ability to model effective classroom management . Academization in the college.

III.3.2 The program in general

The program in general adheres to the official college framework described in chapter 1. The overall approach was given clearly by the Head of Department when asked in an interview to describe how she saw graduates of the College's English department :

"First of all, they should know English, the subject matter they're teaching. I hope we're turning out teachers who are reflective, who think about what they're doing, who are sensitive to many different learner styles and who can apply different styles of teaching. It's a tall order."

(Dr. A , Head of Department. , interview excerpt)

From checking the 2011-12 course brochure and division of rooms it can be seen that all prescribed courses did take place (re: official course booklet and website). However, not all students took all courses, sometimes they received credit for courses taken in their previous academic studies and sometimes timetabling considerations result in them taking a different course instead of one specified in the program (re : interview with Dr A,). Since the academic program is already shortened to a minimum, this can result in certain topics being missed out altogether.

After considering the results of the first part of this research regarding novice teachers' experiences, it was noticeable that there is no course at all that deals with the reality of working in the school system. The need for this was shown clearly in the questionnaires, and also by comments such as the following from Sonya :

“Another thing (that was needed) was practically preparing you, technically for Ofek Hadash (New MOE employment structure), how you go around getting a teaching job,...I finished my training and was in a void... about the hierarchy, who sits where... But maybe you can't learn that until you're there.”

(Sonya, group discussion 2)

III. 3.3 Analysis of specific courses

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how novice teachers appear to be unprepared in certain spheres, despite having completed relevant courses, it was decided to analyze certain courses in depth. The courses chosen for further investigation were those which seemed not to provide the knowledge or skills required by the novice teachers. While some courses were chosen for further analysis because the novices stated clearly (in the questionnaires or interviews) that they were 'not helpful' , others were considered because of an apparent lack of readiness in that sphere – even if the course itself received good feedback from students.

III. 3.3.i Course 1 : Applied Linguistics

It was decided to analyze this linguistics course first, since it received the lowest score in the novice teachers' assessment of college courses (2.2 on a 5 point scale – Fig. 10). Fifteen novices also chose to list this as a course that did not help them with their work in the field. When asked about the courses in the program, the following comments seemed to be representative :

“Applied linguistics?. I don’t know what we did the whole time’

(Sonya – group 2 discussion)

“It’s not fair to judge the program - it was only one year.. Maybe there were 2 or 3 unnecessary courses - there was this linguistic course that wasn’t useful and maybe because of the way it was taught went right over our heads.”

(Joanna, interview, minute 37)

At the same time, the novices repeatedly said that they ‘did not know how to teach grammar’ and asked for more of this to be put in the program. Since grammar, or the structure of language, is a part of linguistics, this seemed to be a paradox worth investigating. Analysis of the course content, together with an interview with the lecturer, Dr. V., made it clear that the course is clearly well thought-out and filled with content, but is not aimed at providing practical skills in the classroom, which is what the students expect. Instead, it is aimed at developing the students’ awareness of language learning. Considering the reactions to the course, it would seem that maybe this is not the optimum method to use.:

III. 3.3.ii Course 2 : Pedagogical Grammar :

In her interview, the lecturer Mrs.B. said straightforwardly that her course is ‘*more pragmatic than academic*’ (Ms. B, interview, minute 5) and described in detail the varied activities and techniques she uses in the course to illustrate and ‘bring to life’ the different grammar points. Examples include using a crystal ball to introduce the future tenses (“You will make a fortune of money...”) and working on a mystery story for the past progressive tense (“What were you doing at 11 o’clock yesterday night?”) (re: interview, minutes 27 - 30). In this way she shows how to catch the pupils’ attention and make grammar interesting. In her words:

“I try to contextualize. I have a little trick for each grammar point.”

In all, it can be seen that this pedagogical grammar course has a ‘hands-on’ approach and it seemed strange that its graduates feel they are not ready to teach grammar after this. Interestingly, novices in their first year have been known to telephone Ms. B. to ask for her advice, which indicates a high level of regard, yet they still feel they did not get enough preparation. I asked Mrs. B about this and received a pertinent answer: that it might be the result of **front loading**. This is a plausible explanation, since the pedagogical grammar course is taken a year before the students begin teaching, which is too far in advance for it to have relevance for them. To quote Mrs B.:

“ We’re teaching application before they have the opportunity to actually get their hands dirty” (Mrs. B, interview minute 41)

III. 3.3.iii Course 3 : Classroom Management

Classroom management and discipline were undoubtedly the spheres in which most novices found difficulty. The lecturer giving this course, Professor R. is an esteemed educator and author of twenty books on classroom management, discipline and student motivation. Originally from the USA, he has now lived in Israel for three years. In America he taught 7th Grade English for three years and university level courses for 30 years, but has no teaching experience either in Israeli schools or of teaching EFL.

According to the students’ reports, he gives many insightful suggestions regarding why children behave the way they do, however the majority of these inevitably come from the context of the American school system. This might point to the reason why, despite the high regard students have for Prof R. and his courses, they end up with very few practical applications for how to cope in the classroom or how to build EFL lessons in such a way that the pupils will not have the time or desire to misbehave. For despite the argument that ‘children are children everywhere’, the culture context in different countries does differ and accepted norms or ways of working in America will not necessarily work in Israel. To quote one novice teacher :

“I thought that Professor R’s class was fabulous...but it would have been spot-on if I was going to become a teacher in the American public school system... because he knows exactly what happens in the American system, but he doesn’t know about Israel“ (Susan, interview transcript, min. 8.40)

III. 3.3. iv Course 4 : Differentiated Education

Analysis of this course showed it to be comprehensive and with a practical bias, yet it also was not listed as one that novice teachers felt helped them prepare for work in the field. Possibly this is due to the front-loading, as mentioned by Mrs. B. regarding her grammar course and evident from Tulip’s comment : “...

(I wasn’t prepared for) teaching different levels... I know we had a course about it and we learned about it but just seeing the different levels in class and finding different books was really hard “ (Tulip, interview, minute 1 -2)

IT can be seen here that Tulip remembered the course and its content, but only became really aware of how this affects a teacher's work when she began teaching on her own. A similar feeling was expressed by Marianna, who was just finishing her studies and about to begin her staj year. When asked whether she felt the differentiated learning course had prepared her for teaching the many levels in a class she answered:

“ I know what to do ... to make different level pupils different tasks. I know what to do, but I don't think it's like I can do it in practice... I know how to do it, but I feel I need to see more how it's done.... Because last year the teachers (I observed) in Teaching Practice didn't do it. So we're learning something in the college but in practice I didn't see it. “ (Marianna, group discussion 1)

This seems to be a typical problem; student teachers are taught principles and maybe certain 'dry' techniques in the college, but do not have the opportunity to observe them or try them out in practice. Possible reasons for this will be seen and examined further in the section on teaching practice.

III. 3.3. v Special Educational Needs

None of the novices listed S.E.N. courses as helpful. When there is obviously a need for these skills, it seems strange that relevant courses are not deemed useful, so it was decided to look into this. *Yolanda* College offers several courses in special educational needs. The two most commonly taken in the English Department are S.E.N. (beginners and advanced) and 'Teaching Reading and Writing to Struggling English Learners'. After analysis, the overall conclusion regarding these courses was similar to that regarding the classroom management course; they had little connection to the reality the trainees would have to face. This was because the lecturers giving these courses were knowledgeable, but again had no experience of teaching EFL to classes of Israeli children themselves and therefore could not give the trainees practical tools.

III. 3.3. vi English Proficiency

In the light of the novice teachers' experiences and the growing awareness in this research that native English speaking teachers begin their teaching career less prepared for how to teach than their non-native speaking counterparts, it was decided to analyze one English proficiency course out of several that are given in different aspects of the language. It should be noted here that most native English

speakers receive automatic exemption from these proficiency courses. In the syllabus, the aims of the course are defined thus :

“This course takes a functional approach to a review of English grammatical structures. Whereas students will familiarize themselves with grammatical rules, they will also apply rules in authentic oral and written contexts, which will model a dynamic approach to teaching grammar.” (First year Proficiency course syllabus)

Going through her course lesson by lesson with the lecturer, Dr. A, it was clear that she models varied teaching styles, all of which can be copied or adapted by the students when they become teachers themselves. She also uses the MOODLE internet platform throughout, giving practical modeling of how to use such a framework when planning a course, collecting assignments and for recording and calculating grades. It is easy to see how the non-native speaker college graduates, who have taken several proficiency courses of this type, may feel more ‘comfortable’ as teachers in an English-language classroom than their native-speaker peers, quite simply because they have spent so many more hours in one. They will also inevitably have a larger repertoire of activities and practical ideas to carry out in class with their own pupils, since they have experienced these or seen them modeled in proficiency lessons.

III. 3. 4 Teaching Practice

There is a general consensus that the teaching practice component is a focal part of any teacher-training program. In regular, full time programs there is time for a considerable amount of teaching practice, with students experiencing varied placements over the three years. In a shortened academic retraining program like the one being studied, time is limited, so it is imperative that the maximum value is gained from the experience. The inspector, Ms TS, worked as an elementary school English teacher for many years before becoming an inspector, so her views on how she sees teaching practice were pertinent:

Q: As an inspector, you see students in the schools. Are students always put with good teachers?

Ms. TS : Not always. It’s very much a thing of convenience. Unfortunately if the day fits or the teacher is prepared to have them... I don’t think the teachers are hand-picked. I don’t think they are necessarily the best teachers that could be. And again, it’s very important ... that these teachers should have some type of training.

..... *When I was a host teacher in my day I let them in very slowly. I let them observe me. For example I said, "Today I want t you to pay attention to my opening". It made me work harder! You have to get (host) teachers who are very didactic – pedagogic inclined our way. In other words people like you and me, who understand how language is learned...then the next lesson I'd tell them to prepare the 15 minute opening. And then I gave them a little bit more to do and so on."*

Q. Did you get any training as a host teacher?

*Ms TS: Never. Gut. It was totally a gut feeling of what I believed they needed
(Interview with inspector, Ms TS,)*

In an interview with the college teaching practice coordinator, Ms O., it became clear than there is no real supervision of the host teachers. Regarding the amount of teaching rather than observing, Mrs. O said that she expects students in the academic retaining program to actually teach one lesson every two weeks. She cannot expect more, since two students are usually allocated to each class, and so they have to share the hour allocated for their practice teaching between them. Some student teachers teach even less than this and feel they need to practice more. For example :

Dora : "We need more practice. Now we teach one lesson here and one lesson there" (Group discussion 1)

Sonya : We needed more practical teaching, with the teacher watching and giving practical feedback (Group discussion 2)

It seems, therefore that there is not enough time in school for students to practice implementing the various skills and techniques they learn in the college as they are learning them. This might explain Ms. B's comment of "front-loading". For if she teaches and demonstrates ways for teaching grammar in her course, but the students are not in a position where they can try out these techniques straight away for themselves, they will not internalize them. As a result, what was taught in the course, however practical and valuable, may well be forgotten.

Regarding lesson plans, Mrs. O describes the procedure for how she works with her own teaching-practice students and helps them prepare lessons thus:

"I meet with every student before to help them plan, and I get the lesson plans and I correct them , I send them back and I send them back again and I do reflection with them afterwards." (minute 15)

It should be noted here that this is the accepted manner of supervision in *Yolanda* and most teacher-trainers do it this way. It appears as if for the students, every lesson is a major challenge to be worked on in advance and analyzed afterwards. The final practical task - the 'Project' consists of planning a learning module of 4 - 6 lessons and teaching this in class. This hardly reflects the reality of being a regular teacher and teaching 5 lessons a day, 5 days a week. This was expressed eloquently by one novice teacher, Angela:

"I didn't feel I got anything because you had two weeks and sometimes three weeks to prepare a lesson plan and it's not realistic. In everyday life as a teacher you don't have the time or the will to make a lesson plan that takes three weeks!"
(Angela, group discussion 2)

One final comment regarding the teaching practice component is that student teachers are rarely left alone in the class. The regular English teacher remains in the classroom, which means that full responsibility for discipline and classroom management is not on the student teacher.

III.3.5 The *staj* support course

While not exactly a part of the initial, pre-service teacher training program, since many of the participants have already graduated from the college and all are novice teachers in schools, it was decided to look at one further course – the *staj* support course. This researcher has coordinated the *staj* course at *Yolanda* College for some years. The principle behind this weekly course is to provide support for novice teachers in their first year; a place where they can continue to learn, to ask questions, to give and receive advice from their peers and simply to share their experiences in a secure, supportive and non-judgmental environment. Some novices find this course a lifeline, while others inevitably consider it a chore. It is noticeable that in general the novices who have the help of a supportive staff team at school need the *staj* group less than those who feel alone in the field. It should also be noted that novice teachers who are already young mothers sometimes 'resent' the time spent away from their children and so appreciate the *staj* course less. In all, though, most novices realize the value of the course. The following are examples of feedback received at the end of the year :

"Personally, I know that I would not have survived this year without this course-- navigating the bureaucracy and surviving in the classroom." (Susan, email.

15.6.2011)

I'm happy to be in this (staj) course because I'm learning from others. For example the discipline activities we gave each other" (Maddi, interview, minute 19.30)

Regarding the content of this course, it obviously varies according to the needs of the group. Whilst all *staj* group coordinators try to include worthwhile and pertinent educational content, the sessions can be taken over with administrative issues, such as how to organize salary payments or whose signature is needed for a novice's *staj* placement to be recognized.. An excerpt from the Researcher's journal after one of the *staj* course sessions illustrates this well:

"As Joanna walked in today she asked me "Tell me, I've heard something about two days off a teacher can take each year. Is this true?" I asked the rest of the group if they knew about this and it seemed that only Lily and Mona were aware of the two pairs of days they may 'declare' in a school year. This made me realize that most of the group simply don't know their rights. So the whole session today went on this type of thing and my plan for the lesson, based on a recent article about Talmud learning in Korean schools (!) was put aside...."

(Researcher / Staj course coordinator 's journal , 6.4.2011)

III.3.6 The College Staff

Analysis of the courses made the researcher aware of certain aspects regarding the staff in *Yolanda* College's English Department and to question whether there should be specific requirements for lecturers in addition to their academic qualifications. For example, it would seem sensible that in a teacher-training college, the majority of lecturers should have some relevant classroom experience themselves. At the time of the research there were 19 'core' staff in *Yolanda*'s English Department, who each taught several courses regularly. There were also temporary staff who gave occasional courses. To gain more data on the core staff, a survey was made of the lecturer's academic and professional background. This can be summarized as follows:

- All held advanced degrees (11 MA , 8 PhD)
- 16 held degrees in English Literature, TEFL, Education or Linguistics
- 2 held degrees in computer science and one in law.
- 2 had no experience teaching in schools at all
- 3 had experience teaching in schools abroad , but not in Israel
- 10 had experience teaching classes in elementary schools in Israel.

Of these, only 3 had taught for more than five years.

- 9 had experience teaching classes in Israeli JH or High Schools.
Of these, 7 had taught for more than five years.
(Note : 6 had taught in both E and JH / High Schools)
- 9 were still teaching in the last decade.
- None were born in Israel
- 18 came from English-speaking countries and one from the FSU
- Ages : 60+ = 11, 50+ = 6, 40+ = 1, 30+ = 1
- 18 female lecturers, 1 male lecturer

‘Academization’ in the college

Since there is now a national regulation that all college staff should have academic qualifications at the doctoral level, this sphere was investigated further. An inverse correlation was found between higher academic qualifications and teaching experience, suggesting that by insisting on staff to be so highly qualified, the authorities might be causing the colleges to employ staff with less classroom experience in schools. This was particularly evident regarding elementary schools. The effect this lack of teaching experience has on the ability to model classroom teaching strategies or to relate course content to the reality in the field needs to be considered further.

I asked the Head of the English Department, Dr. A. to give her opinion regarding the academization of teacher training colleges and received a clear answer that was not in total agreement with the directive coming from above, regarding the need for all staff to hold doctoral degrees:

“This topic raises my blood pressure! We are not universities, we don’t have to be universities to legitimize ourselves. We train teachers... We’re supposed to be modeling always how to teach. University lecturers get up in front of a class and lecture. IT’s another world. We shouldn’t have to go there. I don’t think there is any shame or it’s anything less about the college education in which they get what they need. (Dr. A, interview minute 39)

The findings presented in this chapter (very much summarized) were obtained from a variety of different sources – questionnaires, interviews, diary entries, official syllabi, course plans, staff biographies and the researcher’s own observation. Combined together, they give the triangulation needed to be considered valid. They are considered in more depth in the next chapter- the discussion.

Chapter IV :

Discussion and Suggestions for Improvement

IV. 2 Analysis and discussion of the findings

The interpretivist / constructivist paradigm (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) chosen for this research proved to be very suitable for the topic and generated a considerable amount of data regarding novice teachers of English and their training program. When combined together, clear patterns emerged regarding novice English teachers in Israel and the program of training being studied.

IV.2.1. The program in general

The retraining program for academics that was studied clearly adhered to the *Yolanda* College framework, which in turn corresponded to the guidelines for teacher-training in Israel as laid down by the Council for Higher Education (re: Council for Higher Education Guidelines, 2008). The four main components of teacher-training programs as given by Green (2010) were all included, although not all students took all the courses in the program.

Many novice teachers felt they lacked preparation in certain fields, even though they had studied these topics in the college. There appeared to be two main reasons for this: (1) some lecturers who had little or no knowledge of the reality in Israeli schools and (2) front-loading, where skills were taught before trainees were in a position to practice them in the classroom. Trainees appreciated the practical, hands-on courses to academic, theoretical courses, possibly due to their judging them on the “*very practical grounds of perceived relevance*” (Goodlad, 1991). It would be interesting to know whether the same novice teachers would appreciate these more academic courses better in a few years’ time.

Noticeably missing in the general program was a course or module explaining the Ministry of Education in general, working norms in Israeli schools today and how English teachers fit into the school system. It also appeared that native speakers of English, who were exempted from English proficiency courses, at times missed out on some content knowledge, such as formal understanding of grammar.

Looking to the future, *Yolanda* College could be seen to encourage a blended learning approach, with lecturers encouraged to incorporate technology into their

courses. Interestingly, and despite having taken computer courses, novice teachers repeatedly mentioned that lack of computer-based skills hindered their work in school. According to the course syllabi, these topics were included, so it would appear that this is a case of front loading, with trainees only finding an interest in these skills when they needed to use them.

IV.2.4. Preparation for the reality of being a teacher

Many novices found it difficult to acclimatize and some were clearly shocked and demoralized, suggesting that their pre-service training could have prepared them more fully. This connects to the research carried out by Sabar (2004), presented in chapter 1. Comparing the experience of novice teachers teaching in schools for the first time to that of immigrants to a new country Sabar explains how the newcomers in both cases feel out of place and disappointed, since they had planned the move in advance, worked hard to be accepted in the new framework and had positive expectations of it, which were not fulfilled, or at least not immediately.

IV.2.5 The Need to be Flexible

Another somewhat surprising finding was the extent to which novices found teaching a dynamic and thrilling experience, rather than a familiar, secure profession as it is sometimes considered to be. Adjectives given by the novice teachers such as *roller-coaster*, *exhilarating*, *ever-changing* and *never-a-dull-moment* (Fig. III.6) all show the exciting and unpredictable nature of the work.

It was clear that those novices who were flexible and able to adapt to this dynamism and the ever-changing needs of the school and classroom were those that managed the best and found their *staj* year a positive, rather than negative experience. . To quote the inspector Ms TS.:

“They’ve got to give a little bit of leeway. They’ve got to realize that they also need to adapt and change in order to be accepted”. (Ms. TS, interview)

Considering the above findings, this researcher feels it would be extremely worthwhile for *Yolanda* College to develop a course aimed at enhancing trainees’ emotional flexibility and ability to think ‘out of the box’, accepting viewpoints other than their own and learning to deal with unanticipated situations flexibly and creatively.

IV.2.6 The need to enhance the teaching practice component

Using a combination of the applied science and reflective models described by Ur (1996), the teaching practice component gave trainees the opportunity to observe experienced teachers in the classroom and to try out teaching techniques for themselves under supervision. While the host teachers and especially the teacher- trainers supervising the trainees tried to act as the ‘midwife’ (re: Beck, 1999) and to draw out the trainees’ abilities and skills in the classroom to their fullest, in most cases the trainees focused on planning and giving individual lessons, rather than on the reality of working in a classroom every day. The following chart (Fig. IV.1) summarizes the ways in which teaching practice differs from the reality the novice teachers experience the following year.

Figure IV.1 :The contrast between teaching practice and the staj year

	Trainee teacher in Teaching Practice	Novice teacher in Staj year
Classroom situation	In the class of a host teacher, who remains in class	Alone
Teaching hours	1 hour per week or every 2 nd week	Between 8 – 32 hours every week
Planning	Individual lesson plans One module of 5 lessons (the ‘project’)	- Yearly plan according to MOE & school requirements. - Monthly / chapter plan. - Individual lesson plans. - Special work for SEN pupils - Planning English Day
Discipline	Deals with small infractions in own lessons. Major problems dealt with by the host teacher	Total responsibility, including deciding when to involve other staff or parents
Communication with parents	None	- Giving general information about English program. - Dealing with specific needs or problems - Twice-yearly parent-teacher meetings - Report cards
Additional responsibility in school	None	- Breaktime patrolling - Staff meetings - Organizing festive events
Overall responsibility for pupils and their progress	None	-Totally responsibility for up to 6 classes (200 pupils) reaching MOE and school goals - Giving regular progress reports (‘mashov’) -Finding solutions for SEN pupils
Support	All lessons observed and	Weekly meeting with mentor

	discussed by host teacher & some by teacher trainer. Weekly access to lecturers of English Didactics & various other courses	teacher (not available to observe lessons regularly) College support group (one evening a week)
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It can be seen how the teaching practice component of the training program does not provide trainees with an experience that represents the 'real world' of teaching they encounter after they leave the college. Seeing the difference between the two situations, it is small wonder that so many novice teachers are in shock in their *staj* year!

Teaching Practice placements were not always ideal, with geographical or timetabling considerations acting as deciding factors, rather than the level of the school or host teacher's abilities. Student feedback about teaching practice depended greatly on their specific host teacher and the relationship built between them. An example observed of a student teacher being allocated a class of her own seemed to provide a far more successful learning experience.

An additional point regarding Teaching Practice brought up by the inspector Ms TS was that of the host teachers and their lack of training. Whereas 'mentor teachers' (*morim chonchim*) who supervise novices in their *staj* year must take a course training them for this role, 'host' teachers in schools (*morim me'amnim*) do not undergo any preparation for this and so often do not know how to work with students, and so help them to achieve their full potential and to take the utmost from the experience. The other inspector interviewed, Dr S., also mentioned the need to 'train the trainers' in this context. This is a point that should be taken into account when making suggestions for improvement of the program.

IV.2.7. The need to combine theoretical learning with classroom practice

Graduates of the program felt they were not fully equipped in some spheres, such as SEN, grammar and computer technology, despite having taken courses in these fields. On investigation, it was found that some of these courses were simply not relevant to the reality of Israeli EFL classrooms, typically due to the lecturer's own lack of pertinent experience. Others taught useful principles and practices, but were given before the trainees were in a position to try out their new skills. As a result, they did not absorb the new knowledge fully, a common

phenomenon when information is 'front-loaded'. In general, and in common with teacher-training students worldwide (re: Goodlad,1991), trainees appreciated the practical courses more than purely academic ones. It became clear that for trainees to reap the fullest from such a program, academic learning must be combined with practical application throughout.

A reason so many novices had difficulties coping with classroom management and dealing with special educational needs, despite having taken courses in these subjects (chapter III, section 2.2) , might also have been due to the lack of connection between the lectures and the classroom. Possibly, if trainees had tried out the methods suggested, they would have learned to apply them successfully. Even if they had not worked, the reasons for this could have been discussed in class and the techniques changed or improved. It seems imperative, therefore, that the college find ways to link the theoretical learning with the practical teaching component.

IV.2.8. The need to ensure native English speakers receive suitable training

According to the findings, the common assumption that native English speakers are better English teachers could be seen to be false – at least during their first year. All data sources – from the novice teachers' answers to the questionnaires on how they coped during the year, in which the NS teachers gave lower scores in every sphere (Figs III.7, III.8), to analysis of their personal diaries, the researcher's journal and correspondence with the *staj* course supervisor throughout the *staj* year – all showed that NS teachers found it harder in the classroom than their non-native speaker counterparts (ch.III, section 2.6). When interviewed, they also expressed far more frustration and uncertainty regarding their work, as well as more disillusionment. These difficulties were due to a lack of knowledge of Israeli school and cultural norms, lack of proficiency in Hebrew and also a lack of 'English knowledge for teachers'. There were many examples showing that the NS teachers were simply lacking in knowledge of HOW to teach English. Comments such as

"I had to teach myself what the heck is present progressive",

"I had to learn grammar from the internet" or

"I didn't even know there were different types of present and past"

all pointed to a particular problem that native speakers of a language have, compared to others who have learned the language in a formal classroom setting. Because they have acquired the knowledge intuitively, they do not know how to

impart that knowledge to others in a systematic manner. They are missing the '*principles and practices of effective subject matter teaching*' described by Haim (2010).

It should be remembered here that this research studied novice teachers only. The fact that native speakers of English have more difficulties at the beginning of their professional career does not necessarily mean that this will be the case after several years' experience. Although their higher level of English might be overshadowed by problems of acclimatization at first, it could be that once they have 'learned the ropes' and have become familiar with Israeli school norms and culture, they will then be free to utilize their superior English skills and become exceptional teachers. It would be interesting to carry out a further piece of research in a decade or so, to see what actually happens to these teachers.

Whatever happens in the future, though, it is clear that *Yolanda* college should ensure that native English speakers receive enough 'English knowledge for teachers' to give them sufficient tools and skills to know what to do in the classroom.

IV.2.9 . Academization of the College and the need to balance academic with pragmatic learning

This issue has become topical in recent years, as teacher-training colleges in Israel have become academic institutions authorized to award advanced academic degrees. As a result a process of 'academization' has been taking place in them: all teaching staff are now obliged to hold degrees at the doctoral level and courses must correspond to academic norms.

While carrying out this research it became clear that holding a PhD should not be the most important criterion for training a new generation of teachers and the deciding factor with regard to employment of teaching staff. It is important that trainees receive a foundation in all aspects of the educational spectrum – both academic and pragmatic - and until recently this was the case. Some courses were given by staff with higher academic credentials and so were more theoretical and academic, while other courses were practical and given by teacher trainers, who were less qualified academically (MA only) but had considerable classroom experience. Together, a balance was created between the two approaches. However, the recent academization has changed the balance and now, because

of the inverse correlation between academic learning and practical experience, more and more staff in the college have minimal or no experience teaching in Israeli schools. Out of the 19 English Department staff checked in this research, 5 had no experience teaching in Israeli schools at all and a further 2 had only one year of experience. Most worrying to this researcher (who has a special interest in elementary schools) was the fact that none of the 8 PhD holders lecturing in the English Department had taught in an elementary school for more than two years.

From the findings, it was surmised that experience in the Israeli education system is as important than the doctoral degree required by the Council for Higher Learning. Certainly in the didactics-based spheres, which are aimed at helping trainees develop their classroom skills, lecturers should have a certain amount of experience themselves teaching EFL in local schools and not just a PhD. At the same time, it should be noted that in this research there were some lecturers with little or no school experience who, according to feedback, did manage to model successful classroom techniques. These, however, tended to be the exception rather than the rule.

IV.2.10 The special focus needed in a fast-track program

A final point regarding the fast-track program for retraining academics should be mentioned here. While regular students studying 3 or 4 years for a B.Ed degree automatically receive a good mix of courses and approaches, including purely theoretical courses which introduce them to the principles of academic learning and research, those retraining in this shortened program are already academics with a university degree and so have less need of this. Care should be taken that the limited time they have is utilized to the full with practical training that will prepare them for their new profession. Extra care should also be taken with the teaching practice placements, for whereas regular students will experience a variety of placements, some inevitably proving to be less worthwhile than others but still contributing towards the general picture, retraining academics have far less time to observe and practice in the classroom. Therefore it is imperative that this time is spent in a good school with a host teacher who is both worth observing in action and willing and able to help the trainee develop her teaching skills. Since the time available is so limited, each individual course must be valuable and the program comprehensive as a whole.

DISCUSSION PART 2

IV.4 Pedagogical Approaches for Improving the Program

From repeated consideration of the findings and discussion it was concluded that the main areas in the program that need improvement were as follows:

1. The retraining program for academics being studied adhered to all official regulations as regards hours and subjects learned. At the same time, there was need for a course or module explaining the Ministry of Education in general, working norms in Israeli schools today and how English teachers fit into the school system.
2. A more rigorous acceptance procedure might be helpful, to ensure that trainees have the personal characteristics needed to succeed as teachers.
3. As a fast-track program, each individual course or teaching practice placement is doubly important since there is no time for repetition or overlapping of subjects. Therefore, every component must be chosen and checked carefully, with reference to the program as a whole, to ensure trainees receive all that they need.
4. As a fast-track program for qualified academics, courses should balance academic with pragmatic elements and where possible provide modeling of EFL classroom techniques. Linguistics courses should relate to the foreign language teaching in practice and computer courses include tools needed by teachers such as giving grades and feedback online. Didactic courses dealing with classroom management or working with SEN pupils must be relevant to Israeli schools and include practical methods that work in EFL classrooms, a requirement that suggests lecturers in these spheres should themselves have experience teaching EFL in Israeli schools.
5. More connection needs to be made between theoretical learning and teaching practice. There should be more opportunity for techniques taught in the college to be tried out in school classrooms, to enhance integration and ensure that the new knowledge is not disregarded due to front-loading or apparent irrelevance.
6. Teaching practice should reflect the reality of the teacher's role. Trainees should become accustomed to taking full responsibility in the classroom and not be merely observers or visitors. School teaching practice placements should provide for these needs.
7. Native Speakers of English need to learn more about the formal structure of the language, grammar rules and techniques for how to teach these in an EFL class.

8. Many immigrant teachers from abroad need to improve their Hebrew, especially on school-based topics. A course obliging them to use colloquial classroom Hebrew would be particularly useful.
9. Trainees should somehow be prepared for the very dynamic nature of the work as a teacher and develop the ability to think quickly and be flexible according to the needs of the moment.
10. Novices should begin work in schools gradually, not with a full-time timetable and they should have guaranteed support in school in their first '*staj*' year. They should receive their placements at least a month before beginning the school year to give sufficient time for preparation.

If the list above is looked at carefully, it can be seen that the ten areas in need for improvement can be divided into three broad categories :

- Elements connected with specific course content and balance within the academic program
- Elements connected to the practical work in schools – both Teaching Practice and the *staj* year.
- Elements connected with the need for novices to be mentally prepared for the reality of life as an English teacher in Israel.

Each of these categories will now be summarized: The first category will be looked at in general terms, dealing with principles but not specific courses or lecturers. The second category will be considered with an open suggestion for a totally new framework, combining Teaching Practice and the *Staj*, that may succeed in minimizing the shock of new teachers as they become accustomed to their new profession. Finally, the third area of improvement will be approached pragmatically, with a detailed suggestion for a course that this researcher believes could help trainee teachers become prepared for the reality of a teacher's role.

IV.4.1 Improvement of specific courses and balance within the program

It is not in the realm of this study to decide upon the specific content of every course in the program, or to doubt the high level of its academic staff. At the same time, the findings did indicate some improvements that could be made in general terms.

Firstly, as the program by definition is 'fast track' and students take far fewer courses than those on a regular degree program, it should ensure that all

necessary spheres are actually covered, so as to provide trainees with all the background and skills they require to start teaching. Students on this program take only one (or maybe two) courses in each sphere, rather than several that complement each other and cover the sphere from all directions. Therefore, it is important that the specific topics to be taught in each course are listed in the course syllabi and a cross-referencing evaluation system used to ensure that all sub-topics are included somewhere in the program, and that these topics are indeed taught. The luxury of democratic courses, where students are allowed to choose the direction or content of their learning, is not feasible in a fast track, professional program of this type.

Secondly, since the program is vocational, aimed at preparing its graduates for the teaching profession, more effort should be made to combine academic theory with suggestions for practical application in Israeli EFL classrooms. This improvement was seen to be needed especially in the linguistics, classroom management and SEN courses. All aspects of the program, however, should be relevant to the ultimate goal and include modeling of workable TEFL practices in Israeli schools. For this reason, it is recommended that the majority of staff teaching in the program have significant experience teaching in schools in Israel themselves.

Thirdly, special attention needs to be given to the special needs of native English speakers, since they often lack knowledge of the principles and practices of formal English teaching and learning. They should not receive automatic exemption from English proficiency classes due to their naturally high level of the language, but be required to participate, either on their own level or as teacher's aides.

IV.4.2 Change in the teaching-practice framework

From the findings it was seen that while novice teachers in their *staj* year were quite overwhelmed by the work load and a teacher's multiple roles, trainees carrying out their teaching practice component of the program complained that they did not have enough opportunity to teach or take real responsibility. These differences between teaching practice and the *staj* were shown clearly earlier in this chapter, in Fig. IV.1.

Since the college does not have the authority to change the *staj* framework (ideally novices would teach two classes only), a solution needs to give trainees

carrying out their teaching practice the opportunity both to teach more and to become accustomed to the responsibility of being a teacher. The following suggestion aims to bridge the gap between the training and the real world of teaching.

In this framework, trainees will take full responsibility for the English learning across one grade level in an elementary school. 4th or 5th Grades would be most suitable for this. Students will work in pairs and classes divided, so that each pair of students work with a group of about 16. This means a school with 3 parallel classes could cater for 12 student teachers. The school English timetable would need to ensure that all classes learned English simultaneously, in two hour blocks, at times suitable for students to combine teaching practice with their studies. A delegated school English teacher will be involved in the process, but as an advisor and helper, not the 'host teacher'. Similarly, a teacher-trainer from the college will supervise the program. Parents will be aware of the program and be invited to an explanatory meeting.

To ensure all trainees (student teachers) receive sufficient support and help with planning, all classes will use the same text book and plan the year together with the teacher-trainer and / or school English teacher. However, all day-to-day responsibility for preparing and teaching the class, however, will be on the trainees. This will include checking pupils' work, assessing progress and communication with parents. The supervising staff will only step in if really necessary.

Each pair of student-teachers will divide the workload between them, taking it in turns to be the dominant figure in teacher-led activities. They will be encouraged to give one another informal feedback after the lessons and to discuss the pupils' reactions and participation. At times and where relevant, two pairs of trainees working with the two halves of the same home-room class might decide to take both groups together and give lessons to the whole class – and so get experience teaching a large class also.

In addition, student teachers will get a 'taste' of other responsibilities teachers have. Each will be linked to a staff team preparing for a particular school event and the group of trainees will be responsible for patrolling the school during one

break-time during the week. (This alone will probably be enough to persuade all school staff to endorse this program!)

To summarize, the suggested framework provides a limited, but authentic experience of the teacher's role. It has several advantages to the one used at present. If implemented, it would :

- give trainees more guaranteed teaching time to practice
- give them the opportunity to try out new ideas for themselves, rather than (in some cases) having to follow the host teacher's agenda.
- oblige them to be responsible and come to school prepared, even if they are busy or feel slightly unwell. They will learn to understand that if they do not prepare and teach their lessons, there is no host teacher to do it for them.
- Teach them to plan in advance, working towards main goals and identifying benchmarks along the way.
- Accustom them to using a text book with all its accompanying components, including the Teacher's Guide.
- Accustom them to the way a school works; rules regarding photocopying, fire drills, sports tournaments, the pressure to write report cards and so on.

As well as preparing trainees better for their *staj year*, this framework would also solve the problem of front loading as discussed earlier. By giving trainees inside experience of what is going on in the classroom and the opportunity to try out different techniques for themselves, they will be able to understand the different principles and practices taught in the college courses in context and so will absorb these better.

The roles and obligations of all involved in this new proposed framework, together with anticipated queries and answers, are described in detail in the full thesis.,

IV.4.3 Detailed proposition for a new course

A further suggestion for improvement to the program is the addition of a new course that this researcher believes could help trainee teachers become prepared for the reality of a teacher's role. This would be simpler to implement than a change in the teaching practice framework, providing a 'slot' for such a course becomes available and the course rationale and syllabus are accepted by the college authorities .

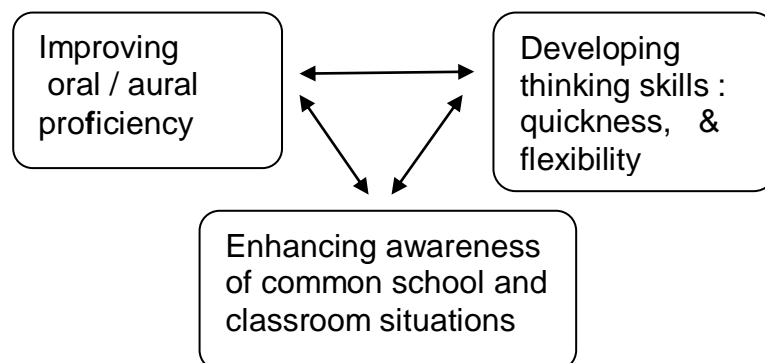
This research showed that many of the difficulties our graduates have stem from the inability to cope with real-time dilemmas and controversies they face in school. They may learn the theories and principles behind many of these questions in the college, but often in a somewhat passive, academic manner and certainly they are rarely obliged to make snap-decisions or defend a particular point of view – regardless of whether or not they agree with it - as they will need to do when they begin work as a teacher. Therefore it was decided to develop a course simulating these situations, to help trainees learn to think quickly and creatively and develop the mental gymnastics needed to deal with the challenges awaiting them in the field.

The course I propose is called : *Thinking through Speaking* . Basically an oral proficiency course, it would be given in two groups, one in English and one in Hebrew, with students taking the course in the language they most need to practice. Thus, native English-speaking immigrants, who need to practice Hebrew speaking and negotiating skills, would take the Hebrew language class, while Israeli-born students, who as potential English teachers can always benefit from practicing their English oral / aural skills, would take the class given in English.

There are three main aims to this course:

1. To provide students with the opportunity to practice and improve their oral / aural language proficiency in a variety of situations, adapting their language according to context, audience and purpose.
2. To develop techniques for creative and parallel thinking.
3. To foster awareness of dilemmas that teachers face in school and to practice on-the-spot decision making based on common classroom situations.

Fig IV.2 . Inter-related aims of proposed course : *Thinking through Speaking*



The main pedagogic rationale behind the course structure is that of CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning. CLIL is an approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium for teaching another subject in the curriculum (Mehisto et al, 2008). In other words, with CLIL there is a double educational aim. Students must progress both in the target language and also in the subject content that is being taught. In this course proposal, a third aim has been added: that of practicing how to cope with dilemmas in real time.

Thinking Through Speaking will combine developing the students' oral / aural proficiency with opening their minds and developing techniques for creative and parallel thinking according to the principles of De Bono (1994) and others. Techniques used will include those of CoRT Thinking (re: CorRT thinking website), De Bono's 'Six Hats', Visible Thinking (re: Harvard Visible Thinking website) and dramatic simulation games. In addition it will provide them with practical experience of on-the-spot decision making, based on situations they are likely to face in the classroom. Formal debate will also be included, obliging them to discuss academic and controversial issues regarding English teaching from a variety of different perspectives.

After a brief introduction and theoretical background regarding CLIL, cognitive skills and creative ways of dealing with controversy, students will begin to experience the topics for themselves, taking part in simulations, debates and a variety of other activities, emphasizing active, verbal participation. The actual dilemmas will be chosen from topics brought up repeatedly in the findings and will be connected to the following:

- Interaction with parents
- Dealing with administration & other staff within the school framework
- Incidents in the classroom
- Team discussions or debates on academic & topical issues in education

A detailed example of one of these activities is presented here (Hot Seat):

HOT SEAT – Parents' Meeting

In Israel it is customary in many schools to hold general parents' meetings at the beginning of each year, when teachers explain to the parents of each class what will be learned throughout that year. The teacher is expected to present her methods of teaching and also to answer parents' questions. All too often, this is

a novice teacher's 'baptism by fire'. This activity is designed to simulate the situation in a humorous manner, at the same time making students aware of the complications and sensitivities involved when dealing with parents.

The activity is carried out as follows:

- The class considers reasons why parents may be 'difficult', such as children with special needs, parents re-living their own dreams and disappointments and so on.
- The teacher's desk is cleared and a plant or vase of flowers put on it, to represent the parents' evening atmosphere. One student is chosen to be the teacher and sit in the 'Hot Seat'. This role will change every few minutes, so a list is made of the order in which different students will get up and take over the Hot Seat. The rest of the class act as parents.
- Cards are given out to the 'parents', with a suggested question on each. They are also encouraged to think up questions of their own. Examples of questions (all of which are authentic and have been taken from the field) :
 - *My child has gone to a private English class for two years now and he'll be bored in your lessons. What are you going to do about it?*
 - *My child is dyslexic and will need extra help. What will you do about it?*
 - *My child is very shy and doesn't get heard in English lessons. What are you going to do about it?*
 - *I want you to send an e-mail every evening saying what you covered in that day's lesson.*
 - *I need you to write in my child's diary what he has to do every day.*
 - *I want to be sure they all reach the correct level. Make sure they have tests and exams regularly and let us know the results.*
 - *It is important for us that you give homework every lesson*
 - *Please don't give tests and exams. They just put pressure on the kids and they don't learn well because of it.*
 - *I hope you only speak English in class – everybody knows that's how to learn.*
 - *My child is scared when you use only English. Please use Hebrew in class too.*

As the activity begins, the teacher is told to give a basic explanation about English learning, but the parents are then instructed to interrupt with their questions. They can also interrupt one another. As can be seen from the questions, parents often have opposite agendas to each other and the teacher in the Hot Seat must answer and find a balance to cater for all. After one or two

questions (or according to a set time, such as 2 - 3 minutes) the student in the role of teacher leaves the Hot Seat and the next person takes over.

After a full semester participating in activities of this type, it is hoped the trainees will have developed their spontaneous thinking and oral / aural skills somewhat, as well as their awareness of potential school-based situations.

IV. 5 PART 3 – Limitations of this research

Any research involving people will have its limitations and this study is no exception. Broadly speaking, its limitations can be divided into two categories: those connected to collecting and analyzing the data and those connected to improving the program.

IV.5.1 Limitations in data collection and analysis

1. As an insider researcher, since some of the novices' comments were both critical and personal regarding certain staff members, I felt the need to 'soften' or generalize these so as not to cause offence to my colleagues.
2. My role with the majority of those I interviewed was not only that of a neutral researcher. A technique I found helpful in this regard was placing the written protocol on the table so the interviewee could see the questions, choose which to relate to when and so direct the interview herself, making my role far less dominant.
3. The research itself was focused on one training program in one college, which is a limitation in itself. However, as the program was seen to be similar to others in other colleges in Israel, many of the findings are representative of novice teachers' experiences and retraining programs as a whole.
4. Limitations regarding the time span : Data was formally collected over two years (2010–2012) and inevitably changes occurred during that time and since then, both regarding staff and official regulations regarding hours of study. However, the overall framework did not change, so even if one or two courses were given by different lecturers or a specific topic was allocated an hour more or less, the overall findings still remain relevant.
5. All the data collected from graduates of the program came from novice teachers in their first year of teaching only, a somewhat limited perspective. Their views about the program might be different in a few years' time . Also, as the native English speakers become more proficient in Hebrew and familiar with school culture, they might find teaching easier and their English skills come to the fore.

IV.5.2 Limitations in implementing improvements to the program

When dealing with an establishment as large and formal as an accredited academic college of education, it is not easy to make change. Therefore, research of this type can only hope to give a sufficiently clear and valid picture of the situation, presenting the reality and pin-pointing the problems in such a way that it must be accepted and acted upon by the powers in authority. In addition, the staff who will actually be making the change must want to cooperate. Fullan (1991) discusses the need for any person involved in a process of change to go through the various stages of accepting that change himself. This includes taking an active part in the initial research aimed at identifying the specific aspects to be improved. During my research I discussed the emerging findings with a number of staff members, welcoming their input and so encouraging them to feel part of the evaluating process and to realize the importance of this study. This should enhance their cooperation when the time comes to implement improvements to the program.

The suggestions for improvement given in this research cannot and should not be carried out overnight. But it should be possible to encourage staff to sit as a team and build a comprehensive curriculum that covers all aspects needed to train new teachers, with consideration of the topics pinpointed as problematic in this research. While unsuitable staff should not be dismissed offhand, the recommendations given in this research could influence the hiring of new staff when positions become vacant. Similarly, while the suggestion for a totally new approach to teaching practice might not be feasible in all schools this year, the principle behind it could be adapted gradually, with trainees taking more and more responsibility as time goes on. Possibly, and with publication of the research findings regarding this, one or two teachers or principals might be interested enough to pilot the new framework, leading others to use it too.

The “Thinking through Speaking’ course has already been authorized. The limitation of such a course, however, is that it is classroom bound. Only time will tell whether graduates of this course will take their new skills and approach with them into the classroom. I hope and believe they will.

Chapter V – Conclusion

This research showed that despite completing an authorized fast-track academic retraining program for English teachers in Israel, many novice teachers were shocked by the reality when they began teaching and felt unprepared for their new role. Particularly problematic spheres of difficulty were those connected to classroom management and discipline (as anticipated). Also prevalent were difficulties in acclimatizing to the school as a whole and dealing with the dynamic nature of teaching. Native speakers of English had an additional difficulty since they lacked formal knowledge of grammar and techniques for teaching the language in a classroom situation and were not always fluent in Hebrew (the students' first language).

A major problem with the program seemed to be academic courses with little practical connection to teaching EFL in Israeli schools, at times given by lecturers who themselves had little or no experience teaching EFL to children. These courses did not give sufficient tools to use in the classroom and trainees tended to dismiss them as irrelevant and did not absorb all they had to offer. There was also a problem of front-loading, where necessary topics and skills were taught before the trainees had the opportunity to practice them in the classroom themselves, which led to only partial understanding and retention of these topics. Teaching practice placements were not always optimal, the deciding factors often being the school's geographical position or timetable rather than pedagogical considerations. In addition, the teaching practice component was based on the reflective approach, with trainees teaching individual lessons once a week at most and analyzing them in depth. This did not reflect the complex school reality they discovered as novice teachers the following year.

Pedagogical approaches for improving the program included: (1) ensuring that the program is all-inclusive, incorporating all the necessary topics in the limited time allowed, (2) augmenting the practical emphasis of some courses, (3) building a new framework for the teaching practice component that will give trainees more responsibility, and (4) developing a new oral proficiency course aimed at enhancing creative thinking skills in the context of school-based situations, which could help trainee teachers become prepared for the reality of a teacher's role.

Three main hypotheses were given before this research was carried out (section II.3.1.ii). The research evidence confirmed these hypotheses, although this was

not always due to the reasons that had been initially anticipated. To consider each hypothesis separately:

- The research showed that in a fast-track program the training should indeed be based on pragmatic, rather than academic principles. For trainees to reap the fullest from such a program, academic learning must be combined with practical application throughout.
- The research showed that native English speakers are not necessarily the best English teachers, as hypothesized. However, the reasons for this were not only a lack of knowledge of Israeli school culture or the pupils' first language, as suggested in the hypothesis, but also their lack of English knowledge for teachers, such as an understanding of English grammar and how to teach it. It should be remembered that these findings related to novice teachers who were still in the process of acclimatizing to their new profession, and does not necessarily mean that this will be the case after several years' experience.
- As hypothesized, the research showed that high-level academics were not necessarily the best teacher-trainers and that in general the more experience teacher-trainers have in schools, the more they are able to model successful teaching strategies. Together with this, there were also some lecturers who modeled a variety of practical teaching skills and techniques in their courses, despite having no school classroom experience at all.

Carrying out this study was a fascinating experience. The decision to base the research on an interpretivist / constructivist paradigm proved to be wise, as this open framework allowed for information to be collected from a wide variety of sources and viewpoints. As more and more pieces of information intertwined, patterns emerged, becoming increasingly complex and interesting as the research progressed and led to yet more topics of enquiry. Being an inside researcher added an additional angle to the research, at times quite humbling, since at times the data collected negated certain preconceived ideas I had and sent me off in totally unexpected directions. Possibly this illustrates the essence of academic research: first to be methodical and thorough enough to collect significant data, then to be open and honest enough to accept and interpret unanticipated findings and finally to be bold enough to act on them. The research process helped me develop as a professional in my field of work and I look forward to implementing the suggestions for improvement of the program in the future.

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Appendices

All the appendices are listed in the table of contents.

Two appendices only are given in this summary , chosen to illustrate the manner in which the data was collected.

Appendix A – Questionnaire for novice teachers after their first year teaching

Appendix H: Qualitative data from novices (part of the full appendix)

- Excerpts from individual diaries,
- Transcribed sections of interviews
- Examples of e-mail correspondence with novice teachers

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for New English Teachers – after finishing their ‘stage’ year

Dear English Teacher,
You have just finished your first year as a teacher.
In retrospect, how do you feel your College studies prepared you for work in the field?
Please take the time to fill out this questionnaire.
Thank you.

Program studied in the College (circle the relevant program)

- Regular, full time 3 year program :
- Elementary school track
- Junior High school track
- Shortened program for re-training academics
- Short program for immigrant teachers, with prior teaching experience abroad
- Other (give details)

I am a native English speaker yes / no

I was educated in (country).....

My Hebrew **speaking** level is : Native Speaker / Very good / passable / poor

My Hebrew **reading and writing** is : Native level / Very good / passable / poor

Details of ‘ Stage’ experience

1. In which type of school did you teach?

Elementary / Junior high / High School

2. To which educational / population sector is the school affiliated?

State / State Religious / other (give details)

3. Which grades did you teach ?

4. How many hours did you teach each week ?

5. How many classes?

6. Approximately how many students did you teach each week?

7. Besides teaching English, were you also a home-room teacher? Yes / No

8. Did your school use online feedback throughout the year? Yes / No

Before you start, circle any of the phrases below which you connect to being a teacher (you can circle as many as you wish)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| * A great responsibility | * A job like any other | * good holidays |
| * Fun and games | * All work and no pay | * interesting |

Now write 3 adjectives or phrases of your own that you associate with being a teacher.

1. 2.....
3.....

In general, how would you rate the year

- a. A truly positive experience.
- b. Extremely challenging but worthwhile
- c. It had its ups and its downs
- d. A steady grind
- e. A nightmare

Being a teacher was:

- a. Wonderful. I sailed through it.
- b. Easier than I had expected
- c. Approximately as I had expected
- d. Harder than I had expected
- e. A total shock, I found it hard to cope.

How well do you feel you coped in the following spheres?

	1	2	3	4	5
	I didn't do this well at all	I found this difficult	I just about managed	I coped well most of the time	Fine. I succeeded easily
1. Planning individual lessons	1	2	3	4	5
2. Planning – throughout the year	1	2	3	4	5
3. Getting students to expected levels	1	2	3	4	5
4. Classroom discipline	1	2	3	4	5
5. Displays and projects	1	2	3	4	5
6. Assessment and report cards	1	2	3	4	5
7. Dealing with special needs	1	2	3	4	5
8. Relations with other staff	1	2	3	4	5
9. Relations with parents	1	2	3	4	5
10. School & ministry bureaucracy	1	2	3	4	5
11. Juggling all my duties as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
12. Becoming a part of the school	1	2	3	4	5

Describe how the year went in your own words :

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How do you feel about your new career as an English teacher?

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How well did your college studies prepare you in following spheres?

	1 This wasn't covered at all	2 Touched on but not enough	3 Taught somewhat	4 prepared me quite well	5 extremely good preparation
1. Planning individual lessons	1	2	3	4	5
2. Planning – throughout the year	1	2	3	4	5
3. Getting students to expected levels	1	2	3	4	5
4. Classroom discipline	1	2	3	4	5
5. Displays and projects	1	2	3	4	5
6. Assessment and report cards	1	2	3	4	5
7. Dealing with special needs	1	2	3	4	5
8. Relations with other staff	1	2	3	4	5
9. Relations with parents	1	2	3	4	5
10. School & ministry bureaucracy	1	2	3	4	5
11. Juggling all my duties as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
12. Becoming a part of the school	1	2	3	4	5

Comments

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Apart from your studies in the college, did any other previous study or work experience help you with your first year's teaching? Give details

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How well do you think the following subjects you studied in the college helped you in your work in school?

	1 Didn't help at all	2 helped slightly extent	3 helped to some a lot	4 helped quite	5 helped me extensively	0 NOT relevant
Theory and philosophy of education	1	2	3	4	5	0
Psychology	1	2	3	4	5	0
Didactics courses (assessment, planning, Teaching reading, grammar, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	0
SEN	1	2	3	4	5	0
Linguistics	1	2	3	4	5	0
Literature	1	2	3	4	5	0
English proficiency (for non-native speakers)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Teaching practice	1	2	3	4	5	0

Which course or courses prepared you best for work in the field? Why?

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Which courses do you feel did **not** help you prepare for work in the field? Why?

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What did you gain from the theory and philosophy of education courses ?

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Do you think the Teaching Practice in your program gave you a good picture of the reality of life as a teacher? Explain

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How could the program been more effective in general ? Give suggestions

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Thank you for your time!

Appendix H: Qualitative data from novice teachers

Examples of novice teachers' diary entries

Of the 100 or so individual diary entries submitted from the group of novice teachers being studied, the following examples represent the beginning, middle and end of the staj year, as seen through their eyes :

Susan – Day 1. September 2010

On my first day of school, I waited anxiously outside the fifth grade classroom. I looked over my lesson plan for the umpteenth time and checked that I had all of my teacher supplies... I took a deep breath, trying to psyche myself up to enter the mayhem and create order. At nine o'clock, I entered the classroom. The pandemonium hit me like a wall of sound as I entered the room and strode towards the teacher's desk. I put my bags down, turned squarely to face the class, and said in as authoritative a voice as I could muster, "*Ta'amdu!*" (stand up!) To my amazement, the students all stood up and looked at me, suddenly quiet. Out of the corner of my eye, one student glared at me with a look of defiance, as if to say, *you can't make me do anything*. I told the students my classroom rules and then allowed them to sit down. I passed out cards and instructed the students how to make name tags. I took attendance. Then we opened the books and started working on the first exercise—the days of the week. They behaved, more or less (with many, many reminders to raise their hands). I didn't know how to handle disruptions, in large part because, despite my efforts to find out how discipline issues were managed in the school in advance of the first day, I had not received any clear answers. I left the first class relieved that I had survived, but fearful of future classes, wondering if I could actually make it in the Israeli school system.

Tulip - First Diary Entry

On my first day I had lessons with all of my classes. I told them what my rules were and told them that if they don't follow they will be punished. I was very tough and didn't smile for a second (my mentor suggested that). The students were testing me so I punished 3 students in each class and it did the work. Everyone knew that they shouldn't break my rules.

I have five class- three 5th grades and two 6th grades. I have two difficult classes and I'm still trying to figure out how to work with them. My mentor

is really helping me with that. I gave them a test to see what the situation of the class is and I was really disappointed. The 6th grades have to work on 5th grade material, and some of them don't even know the ABC. The 5th grades are a little better and I can work with them and use their book. I really don't understand why the school told the 6th graders to buy Panorama when they obviously can't work with this book. It's too difficult for them. I have to do everything in class with them and it's really hard for them to do HW in the book.

I talked to the principal and to Ms TS and she said I should do what I can and try to help them as much as I can. My mentor is really helping me with these difficulties. She helps me write tests and gives me tips of how to work with the weaker students.

I gave my students a quiz about what we did until now and the 6th graders didn't do so well. The 5th graders did a little better. I have to find a way to work with the 6th graders. I'm thinking about teaching them 5th grade material and stop working with their book for a while. Some of their parents even called me and asked me to help their children and teach them what they haven't learned in the 5th grade. I understand that they had a terrible teacher who didn't even work with them but just let them play computer games in the computer room.

It's a lot to do and to handle but I will do whatever I can to help these students. I'm just happy I have my mentor who is really helping me a lot.

Sana - First diary reflection

The first day I got the job at the 'Rex' School I was offered grades seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth. Their teacher was quitting and they needed a new teacher. I was supposed to start the first couple of days or weeks with their original English teacher, although she just simply didn't show up to school.

I was shocked that I was thrown into a class and was expected to teach a regular lesson. It was my first day. I didn't know anything about the students; their grades, levels, books they used, where they reached, what they know or don't know...NOTHING!!!

The principal gave me the worst grade in the whole school to see whether I can handle them or not. I felt that it was totally unfair just to throw me in a class in this kind of situation and unprepared with no lesson plan and to expect me to teach and give a brilliant lesson and to actually come and spy on me! As if they were grading me or testing me. I felt like I was put in a position of embarrassment and betrayal.

The students in this school are very disrespectful and rude they don't listen in any way possible. They are all the students that are expelled or that have failed from other schools and brought into this school. It was very difficult to deal with them.

Later I was offered to teach in another school by the ministry of education. I didn't hesitate to give it a try. I said to myself what can be worse than the situation that I'm in. anything is better than this!

I went to the school; it's called Shaafat Elementary School. I was very happy that I went and started the next day. I quit from the other school and was happy to do so!

Bianca – Staj Journal: September- November

I started this year with a lot of excitement. I would have my own classes without other teachers constantly sitting in and watching me. I would be responsible for these classes. It was a scary but exciting thought for me. I walked into my first two classes with lots of smiles and exuding a bubbly excitement but by the end of these classes I felt drained from trying to get the children to be quiet and to do the work I had prepared. I was devastated. I didn't realize it would be this hard!

I then remembered an experienced teacher once telling that I need to walk in the first classes of the year with the sternest of all faces. Her words were, "Act as a witch." I laughed, brushing it off but after my experiences with my first classes I started to give it a second thought.

From the first minute you walk into the classes you need to expect the students to act according to the rules of the school and class. For example, they are expected to sit quietly in their seats as opposed to walk around the classroom. The next day of classes I was ready with a stern face for my next set of classes. I didn't just walk into the class then plead for quiet like my last classes. I stood in the doorway with my arms crossed and waited with the sternest of faces for them to realize that I am waiting. Most paid attention and acted accordingly but the few who ignored the fact that I was there were called on to come stand by me while the others sat and I then "reminded" them what they need to do when I come into the classroom. These two classes were my best behaved classes up till now and we are moving along nicely. As for my other two I am still struggling trying to fix my "mistakes". I don't take anything personally and am actively trying to get order in these classes by involving the principle and the homeroom teachers. I have high hopes that these classes will improve sooner or later.

Sally - September 24

I must be more organized and better prioritize my work.In the end the lesson planning is really the most important work (and correcting papers and other follow-up of course). And that's what I end up doing until 11 or 12 at night. And then there's the laundry and the food shopping and the dishes to find time to do afterward.... SO lesson planning must also happen before I pick up the kids at 4 and after school ends at about 1:30.SO - NUMBER ONE - PLAN more lesson plans right after school gets out. MAKE a weekly plan for when exactly I will do lessons, how many hours (a minimum and a maximum) and STICK TO IT.

Also, I must get more input from the other English staff at the Nisui (experimental) school in terms of what exactly they are teaching, how, what songs, games, etc. We must be more or less at the same pace and having ideas/lessons/songs from them will help.

SO- NUMBER TWO - Get more practical help from the Nisui staff for lesson planning.

Also, I am so determined to have the most creative and interesting ideas but my health must be more important after a certain extent. I must get more sleep!
SO- NUMBER THREE - I MUST GET AT LEAST 7 hours of sleep 3-4 times a week. THE OTHER TIMES should be no less than 7 hours. I WILL NOT LAST THE LONG RUN IF I DON'T TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

NUMBER FOUR - LISTEN TO YOUR BODY MORE. Do not eat lunch after 1:30. EVER! Eat sitting down, enough to satisfy and then have another snack before dinner, also SITTING DOWN. Skipping meals also weakens your body. Other things that will help: Get the telephone numbers of ALL the homeroom teachers, at both schools. Especially Einat and Rina.

NUMBER FIVE - KEEP POSITIVE. KEEP CONFIDENT. KNOW YOU ARE DOING YOUR BEST AND IT IS AMAZING! These kids will realize it with time, even if in the hey class they are missing last year's teacher.

Go! Go! Go! (And REST! REST! REST!)

So, Firm plan, Support, Sleep, Eat, Confidence - This is my credo for success.

Sally : January 16, 2011

An entry after a double lesson with my group of 5th & 6th grade non-readers.

If I had had a knife in my hand at that very moment Yehiel and I both would have been in big trouble. He was so close to me and he wouldn't sit down and wouldn't do the work and wouldn't be quiet. The class was not going well. I don't even remember know what happened because this lesson has now jumbled in my head with other lessons. But the point is that Yehiel was punished, he had his name on the board three times and he had to stay in at recess. So I kept him in. And then Ada saw me and what was happening.

Lily : April 2011

Something so surreal just happened to me in the teacher's room....

I was making myself a cup of coffee and a female teacher came up behind me and started making herself a drink as well. I had just finished and I turned around to go back to the inner teacher's room when she said (in Hebrew), "Are you an English teacher?"

Thinking she wanted to ask me a question about translation I said, "Yes."

She replied. "Ah, ha."

I respond, "Why do you ask?"

She says, "Because the teachers always say that English teachers never say 'good morning' and 'hello,' so it made sense that you are an English teacher."

I almost dropped dead!

Moral of the story - say "hello" and "good morning" to everyone!

Susan : Final Reflection: May 2011

I could talk about the Meitzav exam, and how the test included two tenses that no fifth grader in Israel is expected to know (but how my top students scored in the same range as the English speaker). I could talk about my disappointment that I am looking for a job because I don't have tenure, and so in my most difficult moments, my herculean efforts this year seem all for naught. But instead, I'd like to reflect on the fact that in September, I didn't believe I'd still be standing at

Chanukah time (December). And during the Sukkot break (October), I seriously considered quitting, I was so beside myself with exhaustion and frustration. I would like to say thank you to Elizabeth for running this poorly disguised group therapy session each week; to my principals and mentor teacher for their guidance and support; to my fellow teachers for doing the same; to my students for teaching me how to teach them; to my better half for making me whole and embarking on this whole aliyah (immigration) adventure with me; to my daughter for teaching me how to be an imam (mother); and to G-d for keeping me alive, for sustaining me, and for enabling me to reach this season.

This year has taught me that I can do what I (and many others) had thought impossible. I can pursue my dream of teaching and of building the State of Israel, one classroom at a time. So many immigrants pack their bags and leave, but I've been given the opportunity to really make it here. I look forward to a strong finish to my "shanah rishonah" (first year) in the classroom, and to starting up again in the fall.

Tulip : June 2011 - First teaching year

This year was meaningful to me in many different ways. On the teaching aspect of things, it was a year that I learned so much from my teaching experience and from my students.

I learned that an English teacher is also an educator. Many students felt comfortable coming to me with their personal issues and I felt proud that they trusted me that way. I tried helping them as much as I can and I sure hope I made an influence on their lives.

I experienced with being flexible in teaching and knowing how to let go when you know your class is unable to learn. When there were violent issues in class I stopped everything and talked to them about it. It felt right and meaningful.

I learned how to teach many levels in the classroom and worked with 3 different books in each class. It was difficult but necessary. Some students were really advanced and some didn't know the ABC. I had to work with different books and take them home every week to check the students' progress.

I learned how to work with the staff. Some of them were really nice and some had no patience for me. I managed to find the teachers who could and would help me through this year and I'm very grateful to them. One teacher took me as her "personal project" and really helped me dealing with parents and other issues.

When I started this year I had two classes who didn't even let me make a sound in class. They would even ignore me when I went into the classroom. Today I can proudly say that those are my favorite and most successful classes.

I made a personal connection with some students who had violence issues and they function much better now with my help. We have personal conversation every week, and when they feel the need they come find me, even in the middle of the day. I feel very proud to be able to be a meaningful person in their lives.

When I went through a personal trauma this year my student and staff were there for me every step of the way. They sent me letters and called to ask how I was. Even now when they see that I'm a bit sad or crying they just come up and hug me. I love and appreciate them so much.

It makes me feel like my role in this world and life is to help children. Not only teach them English but also be an important part of their lives and have them trust me enough to share their problems with me.

I love my students and my staff and I hope the next year will also be this educating and fulfilling.

Thank you Elizabeth for all of your support in the times when I needed it the most. I feel lucky to have such amazing people in my life and you are one of them. Please know that I appreciate everything you've done for me!!

*With all my appreciation,
Tulip*

Sample excerpts from in-depth interviews with novice teachers

The following are transcribed sections taken from in-depth interviews with novice teachers. Since the complete interviews are too long to reproduce in their entirety, these excerpts were chosen as representative of the whole. The numbers indicate where each excerpt appears on the voice recording of the interview.

Interview with Annie : 15.6.2011

2 mins ; I see these strong women – physically and on the inside. And how I look.... A girl.... It made me proud to feel that I was part of them – in with these strong women...that I was a part of something much better than me....

2.50 : I'm not continuing in the end Maybe the year after .. I don't make enough money.... The nanny is 1600 shekels and I make 1900, so I'd rather stay at home with the kids.

3.45 – overall I really learned a lot about the Israeli teachers and types of teachers

4.00 – At the beginning of the year I thought I'd be fired because I was having such problems with my 7th grade class.....

4.30 : Once she started to teach....It was an excellent solution – highly embarrassing that everyone knew I couldn't cope. ..Then it also happened to David ...

5.30 -Subconsciously there was a competition between Drake and I....not that I wished for him bad...

7.40 – There came a point where it couldn't get any lower, so you just have to buckle up, so I got to that low point.... And Drake got to that low point and said 'No More', while I said I have to do something to really do something, because half my classes weren't working... so I had to call the homeroom teacher, the coordinator and parents and so on ... and from there it went up. I don't think I all of the sudden become a wonderful teacher, but now I was doing things I should have done at the beginning of the school.

9.00 : I remember the first time a told a kid to stay after school and I had to call his parents to say he'd be staying and I was shaking with fear. I didn't want to do it, I didn't want to have to deal with this conflict. ...I didn't want to call a 45 year old woman and I'm 28 and to tell her her kid screwed up.

11.00 – IS there anything you should have known?

Yes, definitely. Everybody says you shouldn't smile at the beginning, to call the homeroom teacher with any trouble, to call parents... Those were things I didn't think I had to do. ..But you do have to ...It's true – it's a fact of life in Israel I guess....

13.00 – in America we don't have the home-room system.. I think the homeroom is a big plus

16.40 – I think you have to have two things: the skills and the ability to hold a class interested you'll be an amazing teacher. I don't think I have a natural skills and it's hard for me to hold a class... so it's hard for me. In this school they'll chew you up and spit you out...it IS important for me to be a teacher, but maybe I made mistakes before I started . I chose a HUGE, non-religious Junior High school. ..My 7th Grade class is 40 students... You know how much more I could succeed and the students could learn more if it was 20 students? So sometimes I think about the fact it's not me, but the education system that gives teachers impossible conditions to deal with.

19.15: The students feel it when you lose your self-confidence..

When you have respect without fear, you're in a really good position.

20.00 – You have to have a certain personality for this... I know I'm repeating myself, but all these women (who get immediate respect) are strong, yet they all said their first year was horrible and they all thought they'd quit. Which makes me feel good to see them now. SO maybe in ten years I could be like that.

20.30 : So how could we in the college help?

20.45 : I've thought a lot about this – The Failure of *Yolanda*. Can I talk about this?!... *Yolanda* is a Paradox. There a many fallacies you need to fix. But it's not your fault. It's an institute of Higher Education where you have to sit in a classroom and look like you ...are above us and you have to teach us something high. But you know what I really need? I need for someone to tell to me what you are going to do when you have 3 students who refuse to stop talking. I ask them to stop talking three times, they look at me and laugh. Never once has one teacher told me how to deal with situations like that. How to put across 'authority'. You should have a class called that : 'Authority'. ..You should have a class called 'Behavioural problems' (but we do) and then put in brackets – 'This is what you need to know'.... You guys are meant to be the practical college here... and what did I come out with? I can open up a text book and read a text and go over questions with students... anyone with half a brain can do that ... But how do you control a class and make it interesting to make them want to look at you even..... but you put in these high-sounding courses to make you seem a high level college, but in the end what do teachers need 90% of the time? I don't need that – to learn how to teach a text – which is what I got 90% of the time. I need tools. Actually your games and activities course did help.

24.10 – Somebody needs to talk to Dr.A about this... motivation...

26.32 – The only thing that works is to sit like a fish at the front of the class because that's how they've been taught for the first 8 years. it's so sad, no? When I tried the pedagogically good method it didn't work.

28.30 – Subconsciously I am very worried if I leave... I taught 7th grade this year. If I leave, another teacher will get my class in 8th Grade. What is she going to say about my teaching? IS she going to say "Wow, these kids don't know anything. Who was their teacher in 7th Grade? Was it Annie" IT bothers me..... Have I taught them what they needed to know?

34.00: Were there any lessons you thought were a total waste of time?

In *Yolanda*? Most of them! What do you mean... if I can say names –.....- We need to know practical things... You have to teach before, during and after.... Before – how to motivate and catch them, in the middle, how to teach grammar – which by the way we were never taught how to teach grammar which is a shame.... Because I'm a Native Speaker they assumed I knew these things

which I don't. I had to teach myself what the heck is present progressive... (I had to learnt grammar from the internet) and the after is what to do if the beginning didn't work and the middle didn't work and now how do I deal with these kids. Yolanda only deals with the beginning and the middle...

36.10 : If I were a principal, I'd go for an Israeli English teacher, not a Native speaking American one. They know how to deal with Israeli children

18.4.2012 – Small Group 1 (Dora & Mariana) :

Q: Do you have any suggestions of how would you improve the program?

Dora: Literature (laughs). Literature. We don't need for elementary school literature. Maybe instead of literature to learn more grammar, or more tools, how to teach in school, like we did with you... Or about the curriculum, the domains. How to do them. How to make lesson plans according to the curriculum. This is what we need.

Mariana: We need more practice
(minute 3)

Q: OK. Another student has just arrived, so I'll ask you now. Do you think this program has been practical enough for you?

Mariana : Which program?

Q: The whole program. That whole thing you're doing. You're doing the two-year retraining program for academics, right?

Mariana: Yes. Sometimes I felt like it wasn't enough. Sometimes I felt like the teachers were speaking during the lessons more and ... I don't know, but - Mostly in teaching we need practice , not only in school but also in lessons. Another thing is we didn't share with each other... We needed to see each other's work, because it shows us more even than what the teacher can give...

Q: Interesting

Dora: But last year we talked about our lessons. This year we're not but last year we did.

Mariana : Even still, I don't think it was enough. It was mainly private talk with each other..... For me it was more important to hear other peoples' opinions...

Min 7. Q: Do you think you're ready for all the different levels?

Dora: No

(min 8). Diana : I know what to do ... to make different level pupils different papers, different tasks, I know what to do but I don't think it's like I can use it in practice..... It's like all the aspects for me. I need more practice. I know how to do, but I feel I need more to see how it's done...because in my class last year the teachers in teaching practice didn't do it . So we're learning something in the college but in practice I don't see it. Only like when the teacher explained it...

Dora :I think that when we'll be in the system, as teachers, we'll know how to really deal with it. Because now we're one lesson here and one lesson there and it's not the same.

Mariana: And we don't know the class so much.

(min 9) Q : Do you think it would help if, we were to change the structure and in your imunei hora'a (teaching practice) you would have a class – and it's your class – with no teacher and – say the two of you are in charge of that class and it's 4th Grade... and you just have to teach it. Do you think that would have been better?

Dora: Yes

Q : Do you think you'd be able to do it?

Dora: yes

Mariana: I think that in the first 3 lessons it could be very difficult, but we (would be) more prepared for staj... because now I'm really scared!....It's mostly because I know that when I'm in teaching practice I have a 'back' – I have the teachers from the college I have the teacher from the school, all these things that will help me. But I know that in real life no one will help me. On the contrary

(10) Dora: This year I taught English instead of the teachers as a replacement. I did a lot. Maybe ten lessons I did or maybe more and it was great.

Q: The teacher was there or not?

Dora: No, she was sick and then her husband had surgery ...I taught 4th and 5th Grade.

Q: And you think this was better practice for you?

Dora: It was better practice for me , like real life.

Examples of e-mail correspondence with novice teachers

The researcher's ongoing work with novice teachers during their staj year involves a considerable amount of unofficial correspondence , which provided yet another source of data for this research project. Included here are examples of e-mails received from novice teachers, chosen to show both common topics and the diversity of communication.

9. 8.2010 (Before staj)

Hi Elizabeth,

I hope you are enjoying you vacation and I'm not bothering too much. I will be working at the X school next year, elementary, and the new Y school. I am trying to work out the staj and the mora melava (mentor teacher) issue. I have someone from X school who will be helping me weekly with my work but she does not have an official mora melava (mentor) status, meaning she didn't take that course. So I assume she can't be ``the one" who will officially be my mentor, correct?

Thanks very much and happy summer,
Sally

1.9.2010

Hi Elizabeth,

Am I allowed to call u,if so can u send me ur number? If you have time I think I need to talk someone, I just taught my first class, 10th grade 3 points special track class, and if things stay they were today I'm sure I will be fired or will leave in the middle-defintaly not the way I thought things would go-it was so embarassing when I got to the teachers room after the class ended I cried my eyes out infront of everyone, so unprofessional...

Annie

1.9.2010

Elizabeth,

My rackaz (coordinator) woud like me to take 2 histalmut (in-service training courses) this year: one in school hishtalmut and one online course in order to become certified to teach HOTS (High Order Thinking Skills).

I vaguely remember someone saying in our last class that if we did hishtalmut

this year they would not count for gmul (increments). Is this true? Why? Can they be counted retroactively?

Lily

27.9.2010

Hi Elizabeth,

Can you suggest a novel that I can read with my grade 9 class?

I was suggested Seedfolks and The Outsiders...

I may do Seedfolks second semester but the Outsiders is really crappy literature and I don't think the kids will relate to a story of gang violence. I read it as a child and liked it but reading it over again now I can see it's very dated.

Best,

Lily

1/6/2011

Hi Elizabeth,

I have to do a manual version of the tofes Haaracha mesakemet (final assessment form) as I was told in the email. I am very confused which parts of it I need to fill out myself and whether I need copies of the front sheet with my details for each person who is assessing me. there is a bit on the form which says goals for future. do I fill this in. Then when I have hard copies where do I send it?

I am confused about how many people fill it in. So far I have my menahelet (principal), my mentor who is also my merakezet (coordinator) and a fellow teacher all of whom have seen me teach. I could really have done with a few more meetings at this end of the year to cover this.

warmest wishes

Ruti

25.3.2012

Hello, Elizabeth!

I've got two news. The bad news is that I won't be able to come on Wednesday. The good news is that I finally caught my principal (I made an ambush in the corridor next to her cabinet). She's going to visit my class right after Pesah (Spring) holiday. So wish me good luck.

Have a nice Pesah hoilday,

Nataly

P.S. Should I know something else except what I can read in the Internet about Haaraha Mesakemet (Final Assessment)?

16.4.2012

Hi Elizabeth!

I have two pedagogical meetings on Wednesday, so I won't be able to come to the class. Today the principal (plus menahel bait, rakezet anglit and one more English teacher) visited my class. Instead of watching one hour, they all stayed for two hours and took active part in "opening business ventures". The principal spoke only English and seemed to enjoy the class.

Have a nice week,

Nataly